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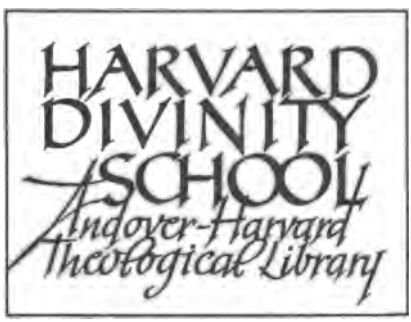
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[*Frontispiece.*

MY QUEST FOR GOD

BY

JOHN TREVOR

All my emprises have been fill'd with Thee,
My speculations, plans, begun and carried on in thoughts of Thee,
Sailing the deep or journeying the land for Thee;
Intentions, purports, aspirations mine, leaving results with Thee.

O, I am sure they really came from Thee,
The urge, the ardour, the unconquerable will,
The potent, felt, interior command, stronger than words,
A message from the Heavens whispering to me even in sleep,
These sped me on.

WALT WHITMAN.—*The Prayer of Columbus.*

LONDON
"LABOUR PROPHET" OFFICE
72, FLEET STREET, E.C.
1897

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1897

IN PREPARATION.

THE STORY OF THE LABOUR CHURCH.

By JOHN TREVOR.

This work will comprise an account of the early days of the Labour Church, with a survey of its development and present position. As My Quest for God forms a preliminary study in Personal Religion, so The Story of the Labour Church will form a preliminary study in Social Religion. The Labour Church will be presented as an ideal on the one hand, and as a realised fact on the other. As realised, it already forms a remarkable example of the spontaneous organisation by the people of their own religious life and service.

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NOTES TO ILLUSTRATIONS.

FRONTISPIECE.—My Wife. From a photograph taken in New York a few months before our marriage.

PAGE 1.—My Paternal Grandfather. These portraits of my grandparents are given to illustrate what I have said of my maternal and paternal heritage, which needs some qualification, however. For this grandfather was intensely sensitive to music, a sensitiveness which runs in his family, though with no developed ear for it. On the other hand, I am aware of no susceptibility to music in my mother's family. My inability to live alone may also be traced to this grandfather, who married again in his old age, because he found life with only the semblance of home unendurable, arrangements made for his comfort notwithstanding. As I think of myself, I feel grateful to this somewhat severe old man, that neither could he accept the lines which relatives so thoughtfully laid down for him. A spark of humour there must have been, after all, somewhere in the depths of him. Did he not shock his second wife with his inability to refrain from getting up from the tea-table and dancing to the music of a hurdy-gurdy—its strains so irresistible! A kind of unripened humour, I imagine, waiting for further development in later generations, who will laugh the more soundly for all this involved in him. Yet how shocked he was when he found us climbing over the bald head of our maternal grandfather, coming upon us suddenly in our riot, and lecturing us sternly on our want of respect for old age! It is all very funny. But how darkly and deeply we are rooted!—And I learn that my dear old grandmother's novel reading was carried to almost blamable extremes in one so pious! She was deaf, and made her deafness an excuse for reading even at meals, though grudging none the less to lose anything of the conversation, and being rather exacting in expecting people to turn their faces to her in talking. And her needlework was neglected, too! She would set herself about it—with a novel, innocently closed, not too far from her basket—would, after a few stitches, take it up, just to see what it was about—but the needlework would somehow slip from her hands, the novel thenceforth the real thing for her, absorbing her entirely. Dear. old folk! I thank God for your failings, blended as they were with such virtues!

PAGE 2.—From a photograph taken not long after my father's death. These and the following portraits of myself are given to illustrate this story as a study in personal development.

„ 4.—Lynn Road, Wisbech—as I knew it. My Grandmother's house, the home of my boyhood, is the nearest of the three under the windmill—the one with the bay window.

„ 7.—My Maternal Grandmother.

„ 16.—From a photograph taken when I was about twelve.

„ 19.—The River at Wisbech.

„ 41.—My Uncle's Garden—wherein I read DAVID ELGINBROD—sacred to me as my Wife's Home, now about to pass into the hands of strangers.

„ 58.—From a photograph taken before sailing for Sydney—which shows how near I came to being beaten then.

„ 76.—Sydney Harbour, as I saw it across the Domain from my bedroom balcony.

„ 86.—The Grose Valley, from the point by Govett's Leap whence I first saw it.

„ 104.—A Sheet from the MS. of this Book. Placed here to qualify what I have said on page 179—showing that, if I write easily, I am not easily satisfied, this work of reshaping and finishing being itself a labour of love with me. Indeed, but for stern necessity, I should keep back this book for much more thorough and prolonged revision than circumstances now permit.—This page may stand, too, as a comment on anything I may say, here or hereafter, on Freedom as an inward possession.

„ 134.—Meadville Theological School, with the Professors and some of the Students, Session 1878–79.

„ 156.—From a photograph taken soon after my return to Architecture, my Wife being about to visit America.

„ 184.—Our Home at Ballingdon. From a water-colour drawing which I made on leaving.

„ 200.—On the Yare near Norwich. In memory of a day spent there with wife and children, the latter sailing their boats while I made this water-colour sketch.

„ 244.—From a photograph taken at the end of 1891, about two months after the opening of the Labour Church in Manchester.

„ 266.—From a photograph taken at the time of completing this book—Autumn, 1897.

PROLOGUE.

In the Art of Living, it is as though we had to work for years with shutters closed, in such dim light as may still pass through, or by such borrowed light as we can get, always with uncertainty and fear as to the final result. Then some unseen Hand throws open the shutters unawares, and we see our work in a strange glow of light, effects and meanings there of which we had not dreamed, our blindest bunglings appearing as cool transparent shadows wherein the eye can now gratefully rest. In which moment of vision we learn many things—that it was enough that we meant to paint a picture, to do our best, though bungling about in the dark—that it was enough that we had a purpose in our work, though not the highest and truest, but the highest and truest we knew—that, to faithful effort, even in the dark, the Eye was not wanting that could guide our hand, though not yet realised as, in part, our own. But this, perhaps, surprises us most—that the product of our toil is stamped with that highest artistic quality—Inevitability—which reveals a Genius we had not suspected in our work. With all this sudden insight, a joy thrills through us, like that of a little child, whom some kindly visitor assures that he has grown. Then, when the shutters again fall to, we have confidence—a Self-confidence which transcends our self—that our work will tell; though not, perhaps, as we had hoped.

To him who has once seen his past in the glow of this revealing light, life can never be the same again, though the glow may not last. Fate is known as a Friend, and Will as a gracious gift, not blind, though working in the dark.

Or ill-advised ambition and of pride
I would stand clear, but yet to me I feel
That an internal brightness is vouchsafed
That must not die, that must not pass away.

* * * * *

Possessions have I that are solely mine,
Something within which yet is shared by none,
Not e'en the nearest to me and most dear,
Something which power and effort may impart.
I would impart it, I would spread it wide.

WORDSWORTH.—*The Recluse.*

[*To face p.* 1.

MY QUEST FOR GOD.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD.

HAD infanticide prevailed at the time of my birth, I should scarcely have been permitted to live. I was so poor a thing, that a relative expressed the opinion that it would be better for me to die. Certainly no influence of connections would have saved me; for my father was but a struggling linen-draper, in Scotland Road, Liverpool. Soon after my birth, which occurred on October 7th, 1855, he failed. When I was but five months old, my mother, with my sister and myself, went to live with her parents at Wisbech, while my father took a situation for a short time in London. There he rejoined us, and we lived in a small cottage next to the comparatively large house and garden of my father's parents, who also lived at Wisbech. Thus my earliest years were associated with poverty and sorrow.

My paternal grandfather was a retired Lincolnshire farmer—a fine old Puritan, who shaved on Saturday night to avoid needless labour on the Sabbath, and objected to wearing linen fronts to cotton shirts. Both he and my grandmother had rectitude indelibly stamped upon them. They had become dissenters from conviction, and had thereby incurred the ostracism of their relatives in the Church. In those days dissent meant dissent indeed. Once I asked why we did not keep Good Friday, and was answered, "Because the Church people do." It was a question whether any member of the National Church could be saved.

My maternal grandfather had been a grocer and draper at

Wisbech, and was now living in retirement upon an income which strict economy made sufficient for the needs of very simple lives. He was a joyous, contented, humble soul, much given to meditation on heavenly things. Yet he was keenly interested in human affairs. Only this do I remember of him —that he used to take my sister and myself for walks, especially to a particular farm-yard to see the turkeys; and that he was accustomed to sit alone in the dark, with a coloured silk handkerchief over his head, and a glass of ale by his side; in which solitary musings or naps he contentedly allowed himself to be disturbed by us children, even to letting us climb into his chair and over his bald head.

From Wisbech we removed to Norwich, where my father's brother was prospering in business. Here also we lived in a small cottage overlooking what, in my memory, was a very large garden, with a wonderful green summerhouse on the further side. Some years since I sought out my former humble home, and found the garden, that loomed so large in memory, to be very small and commonplace.

In this cottage my father died when I was but four years old. I have a very vague recollection of him smoking a long clay pipe—a habit recommended to him, I believe, by his doctor. That is all. But one fact which I was early told of him made a deep impression on me, and was often a support to me in the religious struggles of my boyhood. At a time when my life was despaired of, he prayed, as a father would, that I might be spared; but added, that he would rather I should die in infancy than grow up to be unsaved by the grace of God. When I was old enough to have the need of redemption impressed upon me—which was very early—the terror which fell upon me was sometimes alleviated by the conviction that this prayer of my father's would be answered, and that I had not been allowed to live to be lost in hell at last.

My father was a lover of books, and my own shelves contain several from the small collection which he left at his death. I have read some of his letters to my mother, and have a MS. book of his into which he used to copy extracts in poetry and prose. These remains all suggest a mind that had little opportunity for expansion, and insufficient force to break its fetters. On the other hand, he must have been well abreast of his times,

[To face p. 2.

for I have a card showing that he was a member of the Anti Corn Law League, and among his books were the twenty-seven volumes of the PENNY CYCLOPÆDIA, Chambers' ENCYCLOPÆDIA OF LITERATURE, Rollin's ANCIENT HISTORY, and a large volume of SHAKSPEARE. These things indicate whither his tastes were leading him; and they might have led him much further but for poverty and early death.

I daresay that an uninstructed person, reading the letters of my parents, would conclude that theirs was a religion of mere phrases, so constantly did their ideas express themselves in stereotyped terms. I remember well, for instance, how frequently the antithesis occurs between "the creature and the Creator," and, "Nature and Grace;" and how, by the habitual use of such set phrases, thought seems to be stifled and life quenched. But such a judgment would be wide of the truth. Formal as their religion was in its expression, it was very real in its experiences, and gave them strength to pass confidently through lives of exceptional pain and distress. Completely as I have myself abandoned this formal outside, I am increasingly convinced of the reality of that communion with God which was its inward essence, and that no life which does not flower into such communion has realised its own reality, or entered into that higher form of consciousness which is the goal of human development.

After my father's death, we removed again to Wisbech, where we lived in a small house on the Walsoken Road, occupied by my maternal grandparents, and an aunt, their only unmarried child. My mother soon became a confirmed invalid, and died when I was nine years old. I remember almost as little of her as of my father, for during the last years of her life she was too ill to have charge of her children—my sister and myself. I knew she had much suffering to endure; and the knowledge of this, and of my father's early death, impressed me deeply with the tragic side of human life. But this tragic side of life, so early revealed to me, was not allowed to stand alone. I knew it was accepted with resignation and confidence, as from the hands of a loving Father, who did all things well. Suffering was to me, therefore, never a meaningless mystery, much less a horrible curse. It had its place in the divine economy, as a discipline for this life, and a preparation for the life to come.

A year after my father's death, my maternal grandparents removed to a house on the Lynn Road, which lives in my memory as the home of my boyhood. I can see the old place vividly as I write—the stone-coloured bay window, the wide road, the eight-sailed mill, which many a time told me whether the wind was suitable for sailing my boats, the canal with its muddy banks joining the tidal river at the end of the road, where I often watched the vessels load and unload their cargoes of coal and timber and salt. The little garden at the back I also see, with the rockery in the middle, covered with Poor-man's-Pepper and London Pride, the rose-covered trellis-work at the end, hiding the outbuildings beyond, and behind which I was allowed to make fires of the kindling stored in the shed; the large bowling-green adjoining the garden, wherein, from the bedroom windows, I sometimes witnessed fireworks, and once saw Blondin perform his wonderful feats on the rope.

My surroundings were thus of the most commonplace sort, but they were the scene of an intense though simple life, into which I was early initiated. Here were made known to me, in many a soul-stirring talk, the mysteries of life and death, of righteousness and sin, of redemption and damnation, of predestination and free grace, and of the crowning act of God's love in appearing in human form on earth, and suffering on the cross. I was indeed a "child of many prayers," my grandmother and my aunt feeling doubtless the more anxious about me because the natural guardians of my childhood were withdrawn.

Within a year from our removal to Lynn Road, my grandfather died. The house still remained my home; but after the death of my other grandfather, my sister went to live with his widow—a second wife. My sister and I were thus permanently separated, and the loneliness of my boyhood increased.

My grandmother's talks on religion made a most profound impression on my sensitive mind. My earliest clear recollections are associated with the fear of Hell. I used to sleep in the same room with my aunt, in a dark blue iron crib which stood beside her bed. Well do I remember waking up one morning, in this little crib, with a most distinct vision of Satan, with broad black wings, hovering over my head, as if he had come to carry me away in my sleep. I frequently had nightmare. Besides the more usual kinds, there was one which was exceptionally and in-

[*To face p.* 4.

describably terrible. I used to fancy myself looking through a key-hole into an empty room, which immediately grew bigger and bigger, the walls receding continually from me with great rapidity. My mind, meanwhile, suffered the intensest agony, as though it were being drawn out to fill the ever growing space; and I woke with the sense of having been stretched on a mental rack, until my whole being had been almost wrenched asunder. The impression of infinity as endless extension, and the intense torture I experienced in feeling myself, as it were, drawn out and out to fill this growing space, were doubtless the result of my terrified broodings over the endless pain and duration of Hell.

How to escape Hell!—that was the one absorbing problem of my early years. I remember once persuading myself that, if I could keep one of the Ten Commandments unbroken, I might escape; the one I felt pretty sure of obeying being, "Thou shalt do no murder." Unfortunately for my peace of mind, I sought a confirmation of my opinion, but was assured that, not only would keeping one commandment be insufficient to save me, but that breaking one was equal to breaking them all. To enforce this statement, James, ii. 10, was quoted. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." The law was regarded as a chain, one link of which being broken, the whole would fall to the ground.

Thus, while I was still so young, the dark cloud of Hell began to overshadow my whole life. It was not because it was presented to me very dramatically in my religious teaching, though it was always there—real, awful, unending, and only to be avoided through faith in the blood of Christ. There must have been something in my own mind which could not allow so frightful a reality to remain in the background, but which insisted upon dragging it out into the fullest light. If Hell was there, I must know all about it, cost me what mental torture it would. So I eagerly filled up from the Bible itself what was left untold of my possible fate—the worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched, the smoke of their torment ascending for ever and ever. I feel appalled even now as I recall the sensations which these pictures produced.

Above all things was a thunderstorm terrible to me, especially at night. Bathed in perspiration and trembling with terror, I asked myself what it would be if, that very night, I were killed

and awoke in Hell, where I should never cease to suffer, and whence there would be absolutely no hope of escape. It was the endlessness of the thing that horrified me, the thought that, after a thousand years, or a million years, the torment of pain and despair would but have begun. No murderer walking to his doom on the scaffold has suffered more terribly than I thus suffered as a child. Over and over again have I wished that I had never been born.

Very early I came to say to myself, "It is I!" Like a red hot furnace around me was the awful sense of being unable to escape from my own personality. After all the millions and millions of people who had been born upon this earth, I at last had come, conscious of myself as no one else could be conscious of me, and with a consciousness that could never die. It was not another's life that I was conscious of; it was my own life; and, once begun, it could never, never, cease. Often, in my lessons, or at play, this thought, "It is I!" would suddenly fill my mind to the exclusion of all else, making my brain reel with its tremendous import.

It is impossible to describe this experience in all its frightful reality—the perception of the difference of my own personality from the personality of those about me; the feeling that, amidst all these conscious bodies, it was this one alone that was filled with the consciousness of my particular self; the conviction that the most awful and irreparable doom might already be mine in the consciousness of God, in which I had been taught that past, present and future lived as one ever-present thought; the knowledge that no human soul could interfere in my relations with God, which were already determined in his unchangeable will. A naked, solitary soul, I lay on the burning desert of life, no shelter possible from the searching eye of God. All this mental agony, prompted by the thought, "It is I!" became so acute, that I gradually discarded the idea of Hell as a place of physical torment; for in my own mind I bore a pain unspeakably worse than any physical pain I had known.

And yet my grandmother, to whom I was most indebted for religious teaching, had, like my grandfather, a warm and generous heart, and was very human withal. None the less was she so affectionately faithful in seeking the salvation of souls, that her conversations were dreaded, not by myself alone, but by all the

[*To face p.* 7

unsaved young people with whom she came in contact. On the other hand, she was, in her old age, a great reader of novels and of advanced literature. The first novel I ever read, AGATHA'S HUSBAND, was one which had been lent to her, and which she had no objection to my reading. She had the EXAMINER, too, every week, sent to her regularly by a friend, and passed on by her to other friends, after she had carefully cut out anything she considered dangerous. I well remember reading ECCE HOMO to her. This, however, ended with the remark, "You had better put that book away, John, and get the Bible." Indeed, in the only picture of her that lives in my memory, I see her seated at the table in the little dining-room with the bay window overlooking the small garden, with glasses on, a large Bible before her, and a tender smile of deep peace illumining her aged face. Whatever excursions she made in her reading, the Bible was still her one book.

Her friend in these excursions into the world of letters was a young lady of exceptional vitality, who long rebelled against the restrictions laid upon her in the name of Religion, and was as much of a Revoltress, and therefore a heroine, as such a community could well produce. She visited my grandmother regularly, and lent her books, with the express stipulation that she was never to be talked to about her soul; a condition which my grandmother, I believe, loyally observed. In her old age this friendship kept the world open to her, and gave her intercourse with a kindred though more youthful spirit. Once, when remonstrated with on the ground of her novel-reading, she excused herself by saying, that she was so old that she quickly forgot what she read.

To me there is something quaintly pathetic in all this—the human heart, even in old age, asserting itself half-apologetically in defiance of a narrow creed, which was yet so sincerely believed. If I, too, had been strong enough to have demanded a truce to these conversations of the soul, and to have lived with my grandmother in the cooler atmosphere of Novels, ECCE HOMO! and the EXAMINER—! Still, I had these open to me; and though I was too young to make much of them at the time, I think they were as a seed in my life which afterwards bore fruit. I have the memory, too, of my grandmother, apart from her terrible creed—the memory of a devout, tender and strong soul, bowed

down with deepest sorrow, yet sustained by the very faith which gave the keenest pang to her grief. For she had lost her oldest and dearest son—a very able and charming man—"without hope," as her creed compelled her to believe. She, too, had had her Gethsemane, and had accepted the awful cup. At what cost had she not kept her warm heart, her broad sympathies, and the tender lines on her face!

Of my Aunt, who was for years a mother to me, how can I adequately speak? She still lives, in her old age bearing much physical suffering with a brave and warm heart. Such freedom for expansion as I enjoyed in early life I owe chiefly to her. It was she who allowed me to make the above-mentioned fires at the bottom of the garden, never once complaining of the waste of wood, though always obliged to be very economical in her housekeeping. Later, when I wanted to make dutch-ovens, tin boilers, and wooden boats, she never laid me under the least restraint. She loved me dearly, as a child of her own; and with a fear lest she should be unkind to me, as the child of another. From little things that I still recall, I am sure I helped to fill a lonely corner in her heart. Deeply religious as she was, I cannot remember that she talked to me systematically as her mother did, though she was very faithful to me when I committed a fault, pointing out the wrong I had done, and then praying with me that I might be forgiven.

I was never taught to "say my prayers," and never encouraged to pray as an act which was in itself a means of grace. Nothing was allowed to come into my mind as a possible medium between myself and God. I always had a sense that it was with God immediately that I had to do. Prayer to God could be of no service, save so far as it was prompted by his Holy Spirit; and my relatives had the wit to understand that the Holy Spirit would not prompt a child to repeat "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," every night on going to bed.

Moreover, prayer to Jesus was not allowed; only prayer in the name of Jesus. Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh," not the Son of God manifest in the flesh. While the deity of Christ was held, the doctrine of the Trinity was denied. The unity of the Godhead was asserted without compromise—Father, Son and Holy Ghost being but different manifestations of the one Eternal Spirit. The idea that "Jesus laid His glory by" was declared to

be unscriptural, for there was no Jesus before the incarnation. Equally false was the conception, more prevalent then than now, that God needed reconciling to the world, and that Jesus came to the rescue of fallen man by offering himself as a sacrifice to appease the Divine wrath. They accepted simply the statement of Paul, "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." I never thought that the God against whom I had sinned, and the God who suffered to save me, were two different persons of a Triune God.

Thus the realities of the religious life were brought awfully near to me as a child. There was no hocus-pocus of any kind—no infant baptism, no god-fathers and god-mothers, no repetition of prayers, no catechism, no means of grace save the immediate operation of God's Spirit in the heart. Adult baptism was practised, though not in itself as a means of grace, but as a grateful confession of faith, and as a symbol of a spiritual regeneration which had already taken place. So, too, the Lord's Supper was partaken by all baptised persons, as an act of gratitude and the symbol of a permanent spiritual condition. Indeed, taking the Bible for their sole guide, these people seem to me to have penetrated to bottom facts more deeply than most. At any rate there was none of the weakness either of Liberalism or of Ceremonialism among them; no attempt to explain away or to dress up the naked realities of their faith.

The longer I live in this world of convenient make-believe, the more I thank God for the influence of these pious old folk. False as many of their beliefs may have been, how sound and solid and true they themselves were! There was something heroic, indeed, in the lives of many of them. Though to all the world their grocery and their drapery seemed their sole standard, and the sum total of their achievement; yet, behind the counter, and behind the little dining-room whence the counter could be watched, and behind the narrow yard full of boxes and tubs, their real life was lived—a tremendous soul-drama, ending in triumphant entrance into immortal bliss. Whatever sorrow my boyhood brought me, I am sure that intimate contact with such intense living, though it almost scorched me up, was well worth the cost. It made it for ever impossible for me to mistake external appearances for the inward realites of life, or to accept any cheap interpretation of human existence.

If, in later years, when the old creed was no longer credible to me, I was at times tempted to accept some frivolous gospel or superficial belief, I might well have made Clough's words my own:—

> I have seen higher, holier things than these,
> And therefore must to these refuse my heart.

And if, to-day, amid many difficulties, I yet feel strong in spirit, and confident in God and in myself, I owe it in large measure to the tremendous influences and disciplines of my earliest years. Freedom and strength come to us only through what we conquer. These old folk set me much to conquer, they nurtured me in a giant's school, they set tasks before me that nearly broke my back; but I am still here, with some scars, yet rejoicing in life, having found its meaning for me, and the work I have to do. When I can believe that strength can come without sorrow, and freedom without toil, then I may feel disposed to blame the teachers and inspirers of my youth. As it is, I love and honour them with all my heart.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL LIFE.

THOUGH my grandmother's house at Wisbech was my home during my school life, it was not she who was my responsible guardian, but my father's brother already mentioned, who lived at Norwich; his sister, who lived at Wisbech, acting in some sort as his representative, buying my clothes, and interesting herself generally in my behalf. With all the generous care I have had from these and other relatives, I have probably been better off, in some respects, than if my parents had lived. My uncle was much more successful in business than my father could ever have been, and interpreted his responsibility towards his brother's children in a very magnanimous spirit. Thus, in after years, when my soul demanded freedom in its struggle for life, the means to it were not wanting. The successful issue to these struggles, as will appear more fully hereafter, has been largely due to this. Indeed, if, from the time of my majority, I could not have had a considerable amount of liberty, I believe that I should long since have died—the demands of the soul are so imperious.

But I had still to undergo a long course of discipline in a severe school. I was an orphan; and, to an orphan, life must needs be hard. It was thought all the kinder, therefore, that I should commence in early life those habits which were considered necessary to enable me to push my way in the world. I do not regret the results of this idea. They bore heavily on me at the time; but, as I look back on the past, I see that they all fit into their place. There was no slovenliness in my bringing up. I was always the object of earnest solicitude, and of prayer which carried action with it. All that was done in my behalf was based on principles and convictions sincerely held and

affectionately applied. Indeed, what now strikes me as one of the marked characteristics of the religious community, in which I was brought up and widely related, is the responsibility which each member of it felt towards all the rest. If their narrow creed made them live in a narrow world, within the limits of their world the sense of brotherly duty was very strong.

After spending some time at a Dame School, where I was kept in continual fear of being consigned to the dark cellar, I was sent, when but seven years old, to a boarding school at Wisbech, kept by a very heartless woman. For the smallest faults she would pull our ears unmercifully, and then mock us by telling us that we might cry till we shed tears enough to float Noah's Ark—it would not affect her in the least. For larger faults we were condemned to the almost unbearable torture of holding out a couple of heavy slates at arm's length, not the least relaxation of the muscles being allowed. The cruelty of this woman naturally bred cruelty in the boys, and for two years I had a wretched time indeed. It ended dramatically. After the midsummer holidays, which I had spent as usual at my grandmother's, I was taken back to school by my aunt; but to her repeated knocks at the door no one replied. We learned that the mistress had run away, being unable to pay her debts. My good relatives could not have understood how glad I was; for, as is often the case with sensitive children, I never complained of all that I had to endure.

Living under the continual tyranny of fear—fear of this cruel woman, fear of the cruel older boys, fear of Hell worse than all—I naturally grew up a nervous, lonely and unsociable child. My life was absolutely without joy, and my young heart had no place of rest. At the same time the extreme exclusiveness of the religion I was taught filled me with spiritual pride. I well remember regarding myself, even at this early age, as belonging to quite a different order from the other boys, none of whom had been taught the true way of salvation as I had, and none of whom, therefore, had even the small chance that I had of being saved. Nothing gratified my vanity more than an opportunity for theological discussion, in which I could display my knowledge of the orthodox faith, and wherein it differed from the various heterodox creeds. I knew my Bible so much better than the other boys, that it was easy for me to support my own position,

and to prove the groundlessness of theirs—if, indeed, they quite knew what theirs was. Thus I never was really a child, never natural and simple, but always self-conscious, self-restrained and severe.

I was nine years old, when a new school had so unexpectedly to be found for me. I was sent, again as a boarder, to a Middle Class School for boys, kept by an elderly man whose memory I heartily revere. He had the most beautiful shining white hair I have ever seen, and he was so very short-sighted, and so absorbed in everything he did, that we frequently made it stand on end by holding over his head a piece of hot paper rubbed with india-rubber. He was quite an exceptional man, unpractical as the world goes, but full of ideas and ideals by which he consistently taught and lived. He was one of our religious community, but with a difference; partly from originality of character, and partly because he had not been brought up therein. He frequently read the Bible at our chapel services, and occasionally preached or prayed; but his whole life sprang naturally from within, and was never warped by his creed. He took us to chapel regularly on Sundays and Wednesday evenings, but we had no morning or evening prayers, our religious exercises being limited to reading the Ten Commandments every Sunday morning, verse by verse in turn. I cannot remember that he ever spoke to us of religion, or even spoke of it in our hearing; neither can I remember his ever moralising to us in any way. He was very frank and natural in his intercourse with us, especially on our long walks. Yet he never put himself out to talk with us. Everything seemed to arise spontaneously from him, and to be appropriate to the moment; though, doubtless, he lived much within himself too, and had thoughts which no one shared. Most boys see more or less of the humbug in their schoolmaster; and take it good-naturedly, as a matter of course, that schoolmasters should be so. I never detected the slightest sign of the humbug in this old master of mine.

He was a great believer in fresh air and exercise. Even in the coldest weather our bedroom windows were never quite closed. Any change of temperature or of the wind during the night would bring him from his bed to regulate the opening of our windows accordingly, for he had a great love of exactness in all he did. He always attended to the fires and trimmed the

lamps, because no one else could be trusted to do these things with sufficient care. He taught us that if the bottom of a fire were kept clear, you might put almost anything you liked on the top. He would come into a room where the fire was dull and the grate choked, and would rake away at the bottom bars with the utmost energy, until only a few red cinders were left. Then he would throw everything back into the grate, with some added coal to fill it up, and in time a splendid and durable fire would result. In everything he followed some simple principle which he was never tired of enunciating, even to the sharpening of lead pencils and the washing of his hands. The pencil, he insisted, should be cut away from you, so that the fingers should not be soiled with the lead, for which purpose the knife should be kept very sharp. The hands should be soaked for two or three minutes in the water before the soap was applied, in order to thoroughly soften the dirt. It was the same in his teaching and in everything else. He followed his own methods, and always told us why he followed them, and never seemed so happy as when he was giving us the reason for what he did.

Invaluable was the living impression he left on my mind of rectitude, principle, thoroughness. Without being didactic, he inspired me unconsciously with confidence in high aims. He implanted in me a sense of there being a best in everything, to be diligently sought after and associated with. His influence was due to the fact that he himself was thorough and transparent in all that he did, and followed high ideals as naturally as he breathed. He was one of those rare, inevitable men who produce the impression of being what God meant them to be. His whole method of life was instinctive, intuitive, unconscious. When he gave me my first French Dictionary, he wrote my name in it in his fine clear hand, and then added beneath, without remark, "ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS EST." There he let it stand, without explanation or moral, to work in my mind as it might. I still use the dictionary, but some poor bookbinder has removed the sacred page. None the less I see it there still.

Our exercise consisted chiefly in walking and bathing, the latter being enforced most assiduously whenever the water in the canal reached a temperature of 60°. This exercise was rather too severe a discipline for me, especially when bathing time set in. Going to bed with no supper—save that, on Sunday and

Wednesday evenings, on returning from chapel, we had a quarter of a round of bread and a transparent morsel of cheese—we rose at six o'clock, set out at 6.30 for a two mile walk, had half an hour for bathing, and reached home again for breakfast of bread and butter and tea at 8 o'clock. Four miles and a bathe in an hour and a half, and on an empty stomach, was rather too much, and left me little appetite for the ensuing meal. Nevertheless I learned to swim. Occasionally we bathed in the river, when high tide occurred in the evening. Before any boy was allowed to cross the river, he had to swim half a mile in the canal, and then our schoolmaster would accompany him across. As the evening tide was spring tide, the river was wide and the current strong, though of course we sometimes caught it on the turn. I was the first boy that he allowed to cross for the first time alone—he being then unable to bathe through a severe pain in the leg which was becoming chronic at this time.

We had none but corporal punishment, because other forms involved our staying indoors; and we were never allowed indoors, save for lessons, meals and bed, unless it rained. Even then we sometimes had only the shelter of the shed wherein we washed, no washing in our bedroom being allowed. In winter it was often difficult to separate the ice from the basin without breaking both. At first I used to get the cane almost every day—never severely—just a smart "tap" on the hand for a blot in a copy-book, or some similar fault. During the last two years, however, I never had the cane at all, and therefore never any punishment. Another boy and myself had worked our way up to form a class by ourselves, and the master took special delight and interest in our progress, to which we responded by taking a real interest in our work. It must not be supposed, however, that we were very advanced. At the time of my leaving school at fourteen, I was only just able to pass the Cambridge Local Examination, with honours in French. From what has already been said, it is scarcely necessary to remark, that this result was not due to cramming of any sort. In my school work I was always very slow; but had, on the other hand, a certain plodding thoroughness and insight into the reason of things which helped me through.

My feelings of respect and gratitude towards my schoolmaster have grown up chiefly since I left school, and especially in later

years, when I have been able to discern and value the influence he has had on my life. I think these feelings are the more genuine and reliable from the fact that I have to recognise, somewhat sadly, that he never quite liked me. His favourite boy was the one already named as the working companion of the last two years of my school life; and it was a great blow to him when I passed the Cambridge Local, and his favourite was plucked. But there was a certain poetic justice in this. My companion was much smarter in his work than I was, but he could not unravel a problem so well. The result was that he depended on me to unravel problems, but always got his work done first. As we had no cramming for our examination, this defect brought him to grief. Up to this point he had been, both in games and work, the lucky boy, who always came out first.

The reason why my schoolmaster did not like me was, I believe, because of a certain priggishness which resulted from my excessive religious training; also the more lively and spontaneous qualities of the other boy were much more after his own heart. My success in the Cambridge Local was thus a real blessing to me, as the first solid encouragement I had in going on faithfully with my work. Depressed and disheartened as I was too liable to be, through religious and other influences and an over sensitive frame, this little sprig of laurel was a stimulus of a very wholesome sort.

There was an evil influence in the school, which I feel compelled to mention here, because it made my early religious life so difficult. I write to encourage those who find their way hard, and I dare not let them suppose that mine has been easy. I allude to the usual evil influence of boarding schools in sexual matters. Some of the older boys had assignments with girls in the town, and spoke with the utmost freedom of all that passed between them. My sensitive nature was but too easily corrupted by what I heard; and though I never joined the boys in their pursuits, yet habits were engendered while I was too ignorant to understand their real nature, and which long after gave me infinite trouble.

This evil might have been counteracted somewhat, at least, if we had been allowed the usual athletic amusements of school life. We were never permitted to play football and cricket; moreover, our playground was small, and we had no gymnastic appliances.

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Sometimes we would form a cricket club, buy the necessary implements, engage a field—and then all would collapse because we were not allowed to go and play. Thus we were reduced to mere children's games, save when we bathed or walked. It was very unfortunate for me, for more manly games would have had a most excellent influence on my physical and moral life, as well as on the life of the whole school. One reason for this want of athletic exercise was, that a few years before, a boy was killed on a giant's stride that stood in the playground, which was at once removed. Then our schoolmaster was himself most fond of walking and bathing, and could not have understood the value to boys of games which demanded the organisation of a club, and developed skill and courage and other mental and moral qualities of a high order.

The end of this good man was very sad. One day, as he was pulling on one of the Wellington boots he always wore, a pain seized his leg—the pain already mentioned as preventing him from bathing. Slowly but surely it grew worse and worse, until at last he had to be taken to school in a bath chair, the school being about half a mile from the house. By that time I had left. No one could discover the cause of the pain, or provide any remedy for it. For many months he lay dying by inches. One heard continually of his sufferings, and then that Death had ended them. This was his first as it was his last illness.

As to the final cause of this sad ending of a singularly simple and straightforward life, some of our folk could give account readily enough; my paternal relatives being especially familiar with the mysteries of divine judgment. He had been a great walker and swimmer; and talked freely, though quite simply, of his various exploits on land and sea. His illness, therefore, had been sent as a discipline from Heaven, in the form most suitable to rebuke his pride in his own powers. My maternal relatives, though equally loyal to their faith, were saved from much of this want of human charity by a certain sense of humour, of which they were quite unconscious, but which none the less kept them from this free handling of the bolts of Jove. For it is to my mother, I believe, that I owe that impulse which has compelled me to seek a more human religion than the one in which I was brought up; to my father that severe sense of

truth which held me too loyal to my doubts to seek satisfaction in a merely liberal faith.

And there was something so childlike and simple about this man, and such a charming naïveté in the manner in which he accepted the facts of life—until this last fact of the lame and aching leg, which he found it hard enough to accept, though I never heard him complain. If he did walk great distances, he also designed a special four-wheeled carriage, which he could drag after him on occasion, with his youngest children therein. These people who will judge!—Did they ever tie their family burdens to their hobbies as he did?

Once, in my hearing, he spoke admiringly of my maternal grandfather, already mentioned—of his gratitude and simplicity, and his way of cheerfully making the best of things; how, if he broke the handle off his brush, he would say it would take up the less room in his bag. On one occasion, he said, they had a discussion on the question of "degrees of glory," my grandfather, in his later years, living much in the thought of heaven. The correct opinion among our people was that in heaven all would hold an equal place, otherwise salvation could not be entirely of grace. My schoolmaster declared that he would be quite contented if he just got within the gates, and would not trouble about the position assigned him there; to which my grandfather replied stoutly, and with some humour, that he should never be happy if even Paul were nearer the throne than himself.

This same grandfather carried to his grave a distorted thumb, which, in early life, he broke on another boy's head. I remember being told of this in such a way that I was rather proud of him for his boyish feat, which, I believe, it gave the old man some small satisfaction to recall.

To these maternal relatives, as also to my old schoolmaster, I owe much of the sanity of life—an abiding sense of humour, and of the charm and grace of things. As I look across this lovely valley from my cottage window, and feel the deep joy of the beauty of the scene, I like to think that it is the sad soul of my unknown mother rejoicing in a new life through my eyes.

CHAPTER III.

OTHER INFLUENCES.

THOUGH Wisbech is a small town of but 10,000 inhabitants, yet its being a port only ten miles from the sea enabled me to associate its quiet life with the great world outside. The tidal river was in itself an inspiration, compensating to a considerable degree for its flat and uninteresting surroundings. After heavy rains or a sudden thaw, there was the swirling rush of water from the country above, impressing the mind with the existence of towns and villages and farms and tributary streams, and all the pumps and drains necessary to carry the water from the fen country. The continual arrival of vessels, laden chiefly with timber and coal, the former mostly from Norway, linked our little town with foreign lands, and made foreign speech familiar to our ears. Our schoolmaster knew the most important modern languages, and during the winter months we usually had one or two Norwegian captains or first mates in the school learning English. Thus we had a kind of world-consciousness nourished within us, and our minds had room to expand.

More impressive than all was the constant ebb and flow of the tide, which I soon learned to associate with the ocean and the moon and the sun. This river was to me always a living thing, especially at spring tides, when it brought up with it the salt and weedy smell of the sea. All sorts of sea-things were carried along on its swelling bosom, which rose higher and higher, until it seemed as though it must overflow its banks, and flood the lower parts of the town. How irresistibly, yet tenderly and slowly, it raised the dark hulls of the vessels high above our heads, and as tenderly and silently lowered them again to their berths on the yielding mud! Doubtless I see and feel all this with a deeper insight and emotion than I experienced

then; but I am sure that then arose the first dawnings, not only of a world-consciousness, but of a universal consciousness within my soul. Of the life and strength of Nature this river was a revelation to me in my early years, though the revelation was not yet understood.

And though the country around Wisbech is flat and uninteresting, yet it bears on its surface evidence of the conquest of Nature by man, through its embankments and drains; and also is covered with memorials which carry back the mind to prehistoric times. In so level a country the "tumuli" were the more noticeable, and called at once for explanation. Then there were miles of Roman Banks which, in the earliest historic times, had formed the boundary between land and sea, though several miles inland now. Also, scattered over the district, stand some of the finest churches in the kingdom; but none stand outside the ramparts that the Romans raised against the waves. Thus, in this little fen town, the world of the present, the world of the past, the pulsing heart of the Universe itself, were all open to me, and I began to come under their spell.

The charm of the tidal river and the shipping had a wholesome iufluence on my pursuits. The one redeeming feature of my boyhood, to which I look back with most satisfaction, was that I had a hobby for making boats; and I did somehow discover how to make boats that would sail well. All else that I have written about was impressed upon me from without. This saving grace arose spontaneously from within, the river and the ships being doubtless the occasion for its growth. In the pursuit of this hobby I never remember being thwarted in any way, either by my relatives or my schoolmaster. I had the small amount of money necessary for building the boats, the time necessary for their construction, and sufficient freedom to sail them too. Each boat that I made was larger and more ambitiously designed than the last; and though I was not very skilful in their finish, yet, as far as it went, the work was sound and true. My final effort was a large schooner, too heavy to carry to the water; so I had to make a carriage for it with some old perambulator wheels. It was rigged as a fore-and-aft schooner, and I can still see and feel it crossing the canal at Wisbech for the first time. I think my conceit over my boat-building must have somewhat annoyed my schoolmaster. I well

remember the day when I proudly brought the log for this last boat to the school, and how the boys stood around impressed by its size. The master joined us; and hearing us talking of the boat that was to be, remarked, somewhat sarcastically, "Ah, but he has not finished it yet!"

Out of my love for making fires, which has already been mentioned, sprang an ambition to make boilers, in which, however, I never quite succeeded, from want of instruction and the necessary tools. Nevertheless I did manage to make several, in the furnaces of which the fire would burn up grandly, but just as the water came near boiling, a joint invariably gave way, letting the water run out. Apart from my love of fire and furnaces, I had great hopes that if I could make a boiler I might be able to convert one of my boats into a steamer; but I never got so far as that.

For most of the time that I was at my last school, I had to go on Saturdays, from half-past ten to five, to a shop where a newspaper was printed and published, and stationery, paperhangings and patent medicines were sold. My work consisted chiefly in cutting and folding the papers as they left the machine, rolling up and replacing paperhangings that had been shown to customers, and distributing handbills in the Market-place or the Corn Exchange. Thus I was deprived of Saturday's half-holiday; though, on the other hand, I was allowed to go to my grandmother's to tea, and to stay until about eight o'clock. The value of this set-off, however, was largely discounted by my fear of her religious talks. Being an orphan, it was thought desirable that I should be made early acquainted with business, and acquire the habit of earning money with a view to saving it. For the work I did I was paid threepence, and had to find my own dinner, or rather my good grandmother found it for me. I used to call for it on my way from school to the shop. During my holidays, if spent at Wisbech, I used sometimes to be sent on other days as well to learn to set up type. Thus I came pretty near to being a Printer's devil.

After about three years, I began to think that I ought to get more than threepence a week. At my grandmother's I talked the matter over, and was encouraged to ask for a rise. I was told that my employer would think all the better of me if I did. With my courage thus screwed up, I made the bold request,

Having been questioned rather severely whether I thought I earned more than threepence—a question which I had not the economic knowledge to fully understand, and which I therefore answered affirmatively from sentiment—I was told that, in future, I should receive fourpence halfpenny. But even a rise of fifty per cent. in my wages did not reconcile me to my work. After about another year I broke into open revolt, in which I was encouraged by my schoolmaster, and was allowed, with much misgiving for my future, to enjoy my Saturday half-holiday with the other boys.

Of course the effect of all this on my mind was the reverse of what was intended. It was a thoroughly demoralising influence. There was nothing in the work to occupy my active brain, and its unchangeableness during the whole period made hope or the gratification of ambition out of the question. At school I was steadily pushing my way to the front; in my leisure I was making progress with my boats; my mind was in a perpetual state of ferment over religious problems; yet, in order to give me a love of business, and to train me in business habits, I was set to the most monotonous work, and robbed of my weekly half-holiday. Of course this was done with the very best intentions, and I should not think of dwelling on it as I have, but that it is just the kind of thing which, in varying forms, kills the souls of so many boys and girls.

What I most disliked in my Saturday's work was the bill distributing. When the bills related to horse-balls, sheep-dip, or Thorley's Food for Cattle, I had to go into the Corn Exchange with them; and well remember seeing wheat sold at seventy-two shillings a quarter. If the bills announced the virtues of Norton's Camomile Pills, Page Woodcock's Wind Pills, or Holloway's Pills and Ointment, I had to give them away in the Market Place or in the streets adjacent. One fine afternoon I revolted, went for a walk along the banks of the canal, and, at the furthest point of my walk, threw the hated bills into the water. It was usual, at the ebb of a spring tide, to let about half the water out of the canal, and to refill it as the tide rose again, On this Saturday afternoon the water was let out, and my unlucky bills were carried quickly into the town. Some were picked out of the water and taken to my employer, which led to trouble. On another occasion I foolishly stuffed the bills

down an area, and again the righteous person was not wanting to bring my sin to light.

These, and other faults of which I was guilty, had much the same origin as my good grandmother's reading of novels and sceptical literature. It was the revolt of an imprisoned life, in her case harmless, in my own far otherwise. In my school work and in the making of boats I was conscientious enough, naturally doing all I had to do as well as I knew how. These differed from my Saturday's work, if only in this, that they exercised my brain, and rewarded my exertions by progress. Here there was no interest aroused and no progress permitted. The dull monotony of it led me into wrong-doing. My conscience was hurt; and for faults which sprang naturally from all this mental confinement, I was of course severely chidden. The text of one lecture, the crushing effect of which I can still recall, was the admonition of Paul to those who made the expected re-appearance of Christ an excuse for idleness—"He that will not work, neither shall he eat." I think that schoolboys, especially boarders, do more work in proportion to their capacity than most of their elders.

What with the effects of this Saturday's work, the evil influence of my school-fellows previously mentioned, and the continual fear of Hell under which I lived, my youthful nerves were kept in a state of severe tension, amounting at times to frightful mental torture. My uninstructed and undeveloped mind rose occasionally in instinctive revolt against it all, but the revolt necessarily put on false forms, and I only fell back into a deeper bondage of terror. One difficulty was that I could not understand the way of salvation that was pointed out to me. I cannot remember that any effort was made to enable me to understand it. I was told that I must believe in Christ. I remember on one occasion, at Sunday School, replying that I did believe in Christ. Still, the difference between my belief and saving belief was never made clear. These good old folk were profoundly convinced that God alone, by his Holy Spirit, could teach the lost the way of his grace; and the more suffering that way involved, the more confidence they had in the authenticity of the conversion reached by it. Sin, even that of a child, assumed frightful proportions. Its magnitude, being measured by the infinity of the Offended, rather than by the insignificance of the offender, became appalling.

Salvation could not be expected, therefore, without proportional distress.

I well remember one of the crises which resulted from my perplexity and fear. In one of my seasons of anxiety, I had asked to have a New Testament to carry in my pocket. I must have been then about twelve years old. I read it carefully, at the expense of much derision from the other boys. Amidst the same derision I prayed on my knees before going to bed. I believed that God would not acknowledge my prayers, unless I acknowledged openly that I was seeking his forgiveness and grace. For a sensitive boy it was a terrible ordeal, and it did not get me any forwarder. Read and pray, pray and read, as I might, the way of salvation appeared no plainer. A sense of despair seized me. I must have committed the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost! I must be one of those "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" of which Paul wrote. One afternoon, as these thoughts crushed me, I was walking alone along the banks of the river. The tide was high, but falling; and I stood and watched the water flowing away to the sea. The despair of absolute helplessness seized me. I took the New Testament from my pocket, and flung it impetuously into the middle of the rapid current. It was an instinctive effort to end a conflict which I could no longer endure, though I fully understood that by this act I was accepting my dreadful doom.

Of course I did not continue to accept it. Reaction set in, and a season followed in which I seemed to reach the goal of my prayers. I remember that at this time I wrote a sermon in a small note-book, appealing to the boys to seek salvation through the blood of Christ, and picturing his sufferings on the cross very vividly. The boys read it, and some of them were deeply affected, even professing conversion. The bad boy of the school, a cruel bully of whom I lived in mortal fear, was deeply penitent. We read the Bible and prayed together. Instead of being a butt for sarcasm, I became for the while their religious leader and teacher. But somehow a collapse came, the boys gradually fell away, and my own state grew more desperate than before. I did not know then how unnatural and unwholesome the whole thing was.

I am glad to be able to turn to an influence of a more wholesome character. I have already spoken of the sense of

responsibility towards each other which ran through our religious community. The Church approached as nearly to a Brotherhood as could be expected in this dark Nineteenth Century. Rich and poor met together on terms of religious equality. The real thing was Religion. The poor were looked after, and their needs satisfied. One poor woman of great age I especially remember, who was regarded almost as a saint. She was unable to get to chapel, and was therefore visited very assiduously. I believe she was maintained, also, by some of the richer members. Though so young, I was on several occasions sent to call on her, doubtless with the hope that her conversation might further my soul's welfare. I can still see her little figure, her wrinkled yet polished red face, her snow-white, close-fitting cap, her marvellously neat little cottage up a narrow yard, and the perennial smile of gratitude and good will that beamed from her fresh countenance. Poor and dependent as she was, I was always led to regard her as a very fine character, and to hold her in high esteem. That I thus early reverenced a very poor woman is an experience for which I give thanks; and the more so because the reverence I have learned for the poor is no longer damned by association with a willingness that they should remain in their poverty.

All sorts and conditions of people were invited to meet at tea, especially on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. Often have I heard the remark, "We have not had so and so to tea lately"; and "so and so" was carefully hunted up at the next chapel service. My paternal aunt used especially to delight in having very heterogeneous gatherings at her house for Scriptural reading and conversation. She sometimes invited me to these gatherings, and I can still feel the charm of their democratic simplicity and informality. Rich and poor were there, equally welcome, equally respected, equally listened to when, after tea, conversation followed the reading of the Bible. And how these good people did know their Bibles—my aunt above all! I think none were present who did got go away the happier and stronger; and it all arose so naturally from the religious life of the people. I never had the feeling that there was any cant about it, and I am sure that my democratic sympathies were greatly nourished by these influences.

I had not done much reading before I left school, not because

I was not fond of reading, but because I had little time for it. What interested me chiefly was History and Biography, and especially Scott's Novels. I cannot remember that I was ever restricted in my reading, save on one occasion when I was staying at the house of a paternal relative. I brought from the Library a huge and antiquated volume of DON QUIXOTE, which I began to read before my choice had been discovered. When I was found with it, I was asked to take it back, as it was not considered a suitable book for a boy. In its place I read Creasy's FIFTEEN DECISIVE BATTLES OF THE WORLD, and with deep interest. In earlier days I was allowed to pick up a deal of the old Folk Lore—Jack-the-Giant-Killer, Jack and the Bean Stalk, Cinderella, and the rest; but all this came to me through my maternal relatives.

I must also have received a good deal of mental stimulus from visits paid in boyhood to my relatives in Liverpool and Norwich, and also to some genial farmer friends in Essex whom my maternal aunt used to visit. How high I thought the Essex hills, coming from the Wisbech Fens! How I loved to ride the horses, to feed the chickens, to tramp over the straw in the yards, to get on the top of the haystacks, and above all to ride in triumph on the hay-carts! If it had not been for that everlasting Hell which was always haunting me—! And then there were the cathedral and the castle at Norwich, and St. George's Hall at Liverpool with its thunderous organ, and the magnificent river Mersey with all its shipping and its docks. Also I used to go occasionally to Hunstanton, travelling in the old open carriages; and down the river Nene, on a steamer or in a barge, to gather samphire on the vast mud-flats of the Wash. But I cannot remember that any of these things impressed me, not even the sea itself, as the high spring tides on the river at Wisbech did.

CHAPTER IV.

ARCHITECTURE AND CONVERSION.

In July, 1870, when still not fifteen, I left school, and went with some relatives to visit the Isle of Man. I can still recall the thrill of excitement with which we heard, while there, that France had declared war against Germany, and how general the impression was that Germany would suffer defeat.

This was a wider opening into the world of Nature than I had yet experienced. For the first time I crossed the sea, for the first time saw from a mountain top the land and water spread far and away beneath. It was my first introduction, too, to the haunts of legend and myth. There were no railways on the island then. Even a boy could understand that he was in the midst of a simpler and more primitive folk; and could feel the charm of contact with a younger world. Stories of devils and monsters and mermaids seemed almost credible there.

On the evening of our arrival I walked on the shore of Douglas Bay alone. The moon shone with wondrous brilliance on that calm summer night, and was reflected with strange beauty in the pools, and from the breakers, and from the crests of the tumbling waves. I see it all now, and can still vaguely recall the soul-awakening it produced. Yet, as a whole, the visit was a very unhappy one. I was terribly lonely and oppressed. Instinctively I yearned for a love and repose which life could not give. All the beauties of the island seemed to exasperate rather than soothe me, and to make me realise, half-consciously, that in all this world of loveliness and grandeur I had no home.

I had brought one of my boats with me—not the last made, for that was too big. One morning I trimmed its sails to the breeze, adjusted its rudder, and launched it from the shore, watching it long dancing over the waves until it disappeared

from sight. My boyhood, so far as I had any boyhood, went away with it too. Harder times lay ahead; but it is wonderful what the human soul can endure, and what may come from such endurance if it can but stand at its post.

I was spending my days in a world from which my religion shut me out. The worlds of Nature and of Grace were held absolutely apart. The former was blasted by sin, and had no more place in the soul's pilgrimage than a kind of Vanity Fair—though you had to get on in it too, not by any means stuffing your fingers in your ears, and refusing to buy, as the good Pilgrims did. This strange inconsistency I did not notice as a boy, but one of another kind struck me. I could not understand how the marriage relationship, and all the kissing and courting I saw going on, could be consistent with the religious doctrines that were taught. It seemed to me, still unsaved as I was, that, in view of the tremendous destiny of the soul, marriage and all associated with it was but a foolish and dangerous trifling by the way. Especially did I rise in indignant revolt against the kissing games which had a great vogue then, and the mischievous attempts which were made to bring young couples together. All this was not because I thought lightly of the marriage tie—just the reverse. From early life I had a most lofty ideal of the beauty and happiness of the married life, not so much as I saw it lived around me, but as it existed in my own imagination. But I could not see where it fitted into the scheme of redemption. The intense reality of Heaven and Hell completely dwarfed it in my esteem, and gave it absolutely no place among religious things.

I suppose this singular feeling was the first indication of what ultimately led to my cleavage from Christianity—the divorce, of which I was not fully conscious even at the time, between Christianity of any form, and the real life of man and of the world. And this visit to the Isle of Man must have considerably deepened my sense of this divorce, in what I may call my sub-consciousness—a consciousness which has not yet made itself clear, but which bides its time and grows. It must also have given my soul some material on which to work out its freedom at a later date. But I was not to reach this freedom before I had achieved the life which this religion imposed, with many struggles and tears. Until I had done this, it remained the real

thing for me, all else in life unreal and insignificant in comparison therewith. To have abandoned it before realising it in my own life would have saved me a deal of trouble, perhaps; but it would have meant a mere drifting into that weak and ineffectual thing known as Liberal Religion, which, despite my efforts to be charitable, I find it difficult not to despise.

And so I might well be unhappy to desperation in the Isle of Man. All this bright world of life and beauty had no place in the religion I was taught, and this religion itself hung over me like a fatal curse. Nothing had any place in it. Like the bits of English and Scotch coast that I saw from Snaefell, it stood up bold and clear and alone. Friendship, love, home, business, pleasure, work, knowledge, literature, art—none of these had any meaning imparted to them by this religion, nor did they themselves impart any meaning to it. All that I understood about their relation was that they might, with fatal facility, become idols set up in the heart, while the living God was being slowly and almost unconsciously turned out. On the one hand was the Scheme of Salvation; on the other hand were all the facts and activities of life. Between the two lay a deep impassable gulf; or, rather, a gulf across which a pass was half surreptitiously given, on the understanding that it was taken at the holder's risk of eternal death. At this time, however, I was innocent of all such ideas, and suffered in dumb misery and dread.

I returned to Wisbech. My good grandmother had died. My aunt had taken a little house in another part of the town; and there I lived with her during the winter of 1870—71. It was intended that I should take up some form of business. But I had had quite enough experience of the shop, and also my boat-building and boiler-making gave me leanings in another direction. I said I should like to be a Builder or an Engineer. This desire was declared impracticable by my paternal aunt, as I could not be seen going about in workman's clothes. Then I said I would like to be an Architect; and this wish, being made known to my uncle in Norwich, was generously granted. I went for some months to an architect's office at Wisbech, and then was articled to a Norwich architect for five years. I can still recall the visions that passed before my mind of the grand buildings I would one day erect.

This choice of a profession was an exceedingly happy one for

me. Of course the difference between a calling and an enthusiastic boy's conception of it is almost infinite. I have never erected the vast sweeping colonnades that were the dream of my youthful days. But Architecture opened out to me a very wide range of experience and knowledge, and gave me a very sound education in both the ideal and the practical world. I doubt whether any other profession is so comprehensive as an educational influence. Besides the artistic sense and power which it cultivates, it requires a general knowledge of the history and principles of Art, the practice of various kinds of drawing and design, the study of natural objects for decorative purposes, some knowledge of the law and the nature of legal obligation, a considerable practical acquaintance with the various building trades and all their numerous operations, a knowledge of the qualities of building material and the principles of building construction, while there are further the departments of quantity surveying, the writing of specifications, the valuation of property, the surveying of land and buildings, drainage, road-making, the direction of large bodies of men, the settlement of disputes between employer and contractor or employer and adjoining owner, the overcoming of physical difficulties in special building operations, and all the business energy and responsibility which such a profession demands.

I had the good fortune to be trained in a provincial office where I could learn all branches of the profession, and could constantly visit buildings in course of erection. In a London office so wide an experience could not have been obtained. Here, at least, I had full scope for intellectual and artistic activity. I was free, also, to advance in my work according to my industry and capacity. The gentleman to whom I was articled and the manager of his office afforded me every opportunity for instruction and practical progress. Hence, in spite of drawbacks to be mentioned, I thoroughly enjoyed my work, and gained a sound and general knowledge of Architecture.

It was on the first of April, 1871, that I went to Norwich, and commenced to live alone in lodgings at the age of fifteen. During this period I occupied five different sets of apartments, but I need not enter into any particulars about them. However much they differed, their differences had no special effect on

my religious life. They all had the common quality of being lodgings, and this quality affected me very badly. It helped still further to develop the lonely self-centredness of my school days, and gave free play to all the unwholesome tendencies of my nature. From seven to fourteen at boarding schools, from fifteen onwards in lodgings—it is not surprising that, to this day, I find myself deficient in the sociable virtues; to which defect my religious training, and an over sensitive temperament, have greatly contributed. All this, however, has not destroyed the child life in me, nor the love of humour. It has only destroyed the power to express these things. I love children, and child-books, and folk lore; and one of my favourite works is TRISTRAM SHANDY. But all this love remains dumb within me for the most part.

The new interest in life and outlet for mental energy which my architectural work gave me reacted favourably on my religious difficulties. I applied myself steadily to their solution, reading the Bible, and praying earnestly to be shown the way of salvation. It was Paul's Epistle to the Romans that at last filled me with light. On reading the verse, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," my eyes were suddenly opened. I saw the way of salvation clearly, and accepted it gladly. Now, for the first time, I realised that salvation was the free gift of God through the atoning blood of Christ; and that all I had to do was to accept the gift as freely as it was offered. Of course, in the very nature of the gift, a great deal more was involved—a life-long gratitude to the giver, a continual growth in consecration to his service, the making known of the grace of God to my fellows, and constant prayer for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit into all holiness and truth. This first act of faith was but the narrow gateway to the Christian life; but I had been taught that, having once passed through it by the grace of God, the good work which he had begun in me he would also carry through, so that there was now no possibility of my being lost. This was known as the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints.

It will thus be seen that I was brought up in the Calvinist faith; but here, as in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity, there was a marked difference between this small section of Baptists and those more widely known. The great body of Baptists has

been divided into Particular and General; the former being Calvinist, the latter Arminian. My own friends accepted both doctrines, finding both taught most explicitly in the Bible. They believed that only those were saved whom God had elected for salvation, from which belief the doctrine of final perseverance naturally sprang. But while they thus asserted the universal knowledge and power of God, they were compelled also to acknowledge his universal love as manifested by the death of Christ. "Christ died for all." Of this there could be no question. Then God's grace was open to all, and must be preached freely to all, in order that all might have the opportunity of being saved.

Of course these two doctrines of Predestination and Free Grace are in flat contradiction to each other. The intellect cannot reconcile them. But both are taught most plainly in the Bible. All that remained, therefore, was to accept both as equally true, and to act on both without further questioning. I well remember a much revered preacher at Wisbech declaring that it was impossible to harmonise these two views by human reasoning, but that each was none the less to be accepted, since each stood revealed in God's word.

In the sudden opening of my eyes, so long blinded, to the way of salvation, and in the acceptance of these two irreconcilable doctrines, I believe two most important practical truths lie hidden. Both illustrate in different ways the fact that, for the perception of the highest truth, the Intellect holds a subordinate position. It must be regarded as the servant of the whole man, not the master. I can see now that I was blind to the way of salvation until my will was ready to accept it, and that herein lay the answer to the question which I used to ask—believing, as I did, in Jesus Christ; why, then, was I not saved? Religious faith is not merely an intellectual belief; it is rather an act of the will which carries conviction with it. In our merely intellectual beliefs we are scarcely responsible beings. The Intellect works mechanically upon the materials presented to it. But the heroic Will, instinctively pressing forward to new ventures in life, breaks up new material and gains new experiences, which the Intellect, hobbling after, accepts, arranges, and catalogues. When my will was ready for the venture, then my intellect saw.

Equally important is the truth which lay beneath my Calvinist-

Arminian teaching. Calvinism and Arminianism, Predestination and Free Grace, are simply the Christian forms of the world-wide side-taking in the controversy respecting Fate and Free will. My good friends closed the controversy by taking both sides, and acting upon both doctrines. This is but another illustration of the fact that Will is greater than Reason. In the world of affairs the Libertarian and the Necessarian follow much the same line, the chief distinction being that they give different reasons for doing the same thing. Among Socialists, for instance, we find men of both schools working for the same end. The Necessarian says, "Man is the product of his environment; therefore we must improve his environment." The Libertarian says, "Man is a progressive being; and this thing you call civilisation is no longer tolerable to his growing conscience." Or again, in the movement for criminal reform, the Materialist points out the folly of treating criminals as free agents, by his measurement of the brain and the presentation of a whole series of facts which prove the connection between physical condition and crime. The Spiritualist, on the other hand, views the criminal as a neglected brother, in whom the divine spark still lives; and he desires, by various means, prompted by faith and love, to fan this spark into a flame.

It would give an enormous impetus to progress if we had the genius to see that in these and all similar controversies—to name another, that between the Anarchist and the State Socialist—both sides are right in what they assert, but both wrong in denying the assertions of the other side. This practical genius does exist largely in the English people, and that is why we have made more progress with less trouble than other nations. But it is a blind genius. We can give no satisfactory account of our practical way of looking at things. We call it, perhaps, the happy habit of compromise; and affect to despise our more logical neighbours. This kind of explanation is demoralising. It is dangerous to be greater than we know. In the fundamental dualism of all phenomenal life lies the reason for the successful issue of what we call compromise. To understand this enables us to put the logical man in his true place, as a one-eyed man, who is blind to half the facts of life.

The mistake of the Intellect has been, that it has assumed a relationship between phenomenal facts which does not really exist, namely, the relationship of intellectual consistency. Of

course I am speaking of the limited human intellect. Doubtless, at its source, Life is One and Divine; but in its manifestations to the human mind it appears in very complex dual forms, which seem more or less contradictory. Need I enumerate some of the more fundamental of these forms?—Subject and Object, Mind and Matter, God and the Universe, Free Will and Necessity, Good and Evil, Being and Becoming, the Real and the Phenomenal—such are some of them, which the Intellect of man has never been able to resolve into unity, or to harmonise in any Philosophy. The whole history of Philosophy proves that the human Intellect has been attempting what remains for it impossible. The Universe itself knows nothing of the limitations of human reason. On the other hand, I am convinced that, in man, there is being evolved a higher power of insight, which will enable him to grasp the unity of all things; but many ages, doubtless, will be needed for this unfolding. Meanwhile, each of us may co-operate towards this end according to his measure. All my present work for my fellows is based on this conviction—not a conviction of the study, but arising from the experiences of life.

I have never been able to trace any conscious connection between this early Calvinist-Arminian teaching and my present position, yet I think it must have largely helped me towards it. I believe it must have left a permanent impression on my mind which may be expressed in various ways—that no one statement on any subject can possibly sum up the whole truth about it; that to act on one idea alone in any direction will certainly lead us astray; that truth has always two sides, to be seen with two eyes; that one idea will never save the world, and that the man of one idea is never the leader of any solid progress; that people who can accept but one idea may produce great changes, but cannot bring about any permanent advancement; that the other idea, the necessary complement of the one, cannot be neglected with impunity.

This truth is of that order which the Intellect will never see until the Will is ready to adopt it. We wish to narrow down the Universe to the limitations of our own reason. We fear we should feel lonely and lost if we realised our true position. We dare not turn out into the open, and look "this mighty sum of things" in the face, without first insisting on conclusions, or at

least conditions. To love this mighty Universe, and crave her love; to abandon our souls to her in perfect confidence and awe; to passionately wed our souls with her as she is, for better or worse, with no fear of discovering a worse—how few have the instinctive genius to do this—and live! Nothing so convinces me of the fundamental unity and divinity of life as the fact that we are ourselves capable of living a life larger and more complex than our Intellect can grasp, much less control and direct. In the arrangement of its various details, Reason must in some sense be our guide; but in its combined unity and variety it is some higher power of the creative Will that assumes the sway in any really sane life. If we would study the logical outcome of the rejection of this doctrine of Dualism, we can find it in that frightful bar to progress—the Crank.

Were my friends right, then, in teaching me to entertain both Calvinism and Arminianism in defiance of Reason? At any rate they were far more right than either the Calvinist or the Arminian. Wherein they were wrong was simply in the false dogmatic form in which they held a true working principle; and this false dogmatic form blinded them to its essential truth. For my own part, after my conversion, I argued it out in this manner with myself:—"If the doctrine of Election were not true, I should go mad; because my neglect might cause the damnation of many souls; but if the doctrine of Free Grace were not true, I should lose the incentive to seek the salvation of souls." So I, too, accepted both doctrines, in spite of their intellectual incompatibility, as the only practical way out of the far greater difficulty of denying the one or the other. It was only necessary for me to get this idea out of its dogmatic garb, in order to recognise it as a principle most essential to real progress.

Its practical application this is not the place to discuss. I will only point out here that this principle must not be allowed to reduce us to inaction. In the struggles of the Great Arena we shall still take sides on behalf of that half of the Truth which man is always liable to reject; and yet we shall know that the highest service we can render to progress is to recognise the limitations of our own side, and to keep our eyes open to its defects. No man who understands this principle truly will, therefore, keep out of the Arena; but neither will he become a narrow-minded partisan or a one-eyed Demagogue.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTIANITY IN LODGINGS.

In Norwich was a small Baptist chapel belonging to the same group as the one at Wisbech. There were others at Liverpool, Towcester, Newark and Lymm. The one at Wisbech was the largest, and is still in a flourishing condition. Only the members of this little handful of Churches held the true faith, and only they were sure of salvation. They thought it a great sin for one of their number to marry outside the pale, regarding the members of other Churches practically as unbelievers, refusing to partake of the Lord's Supper with them, or to enter into any sort of religious fellowship. Of course those who are still left of this small denomination have marched more or less with the times; and, while holding their former distinctive doctrines, have grown much broader in their sympathies.

One important change of doctrine, however, was made before I left Wisbech. The leading minister, a fine, upright old man, with a deal of humour in his private relations, and who was regarded almost as an oracle by the people, preached a series of seven sermons, in which he exhaustively proved that Hell was not eternal, but that the Devil and his angels and all the wicked would be annihilated at the Day of Judgment. I well remember the subdued but deep excitement which those sermons produced. The new doctrine was accepted by nearly all the Church; though a few of the harder and more old-fashioned members deprecated it strongly, as being likely to lessen the sense of sin and the desire for salvation among the unconverted. Certainly this was not the result in my own case. The unmitigated horror of the old doctrine had stupefied and almost paralysed me. The new doctrine was bad enough in all conscience. Still it left me more free to long for the eternal

happiness of Heaven, and more sensible to the love of God which was to be the source of that happiness.

Naturally, on coming to Norwich, I attended the services of the little Baptist Chapel already mentioned. After time had been given to test the reality of my conversion, I was received as a member of the Church, and baptised by immersion. It seemed now as though my religious difficulties were over, and that all that remained was to grow in Christian service and life. I took a class of boys in the Sunday School. I worked steadily at my profession, and made good progress. Yet there was no place for Architecture in my Religion, and it was in the latter that I found my chief interest. The result was that, though I thoroughly liked my work, I did scarcely anything for my advancement out of office hours; what little I did being done spasmodically and to small profit.

It was not for very long that my new peace of mind lasted. Clouds began to gather slowly but surely about me. With a very sensitive and intense nature, weakened by the frightful sufferings of my boyhood, and demoralised by some of its influences, I was set to fight the battle of life alone in lodgings, with no knowledge of what life really was, and in entire ignorance of my own nature and its requirements. As my equipment for the fight, I had nothing but an entirely artificial Scheme of Redemption. For everything that befell me, for all the difficulties I had to overcome, for the control of my animal nature, and the development of my intellectual, moral and spiritual life, the grace of God was set before me as all sufficient. I know now that the creed of my youth was utterly unsuited to my needs. Yet, as I had been taught it so patiently and consistently, so I held it most unquestioningly; and, in the conflicts that ensued, I never hesitated to condemn myself as being wholly and inexcusably at fault.

Now and again the bad influences of my school life would assert themselves. Happily the very sensitiveness of my nature, which made life in lodgings so severe a trial, yet made it impossible for me to live in open vice. I shrank in horror from the ugliness and hatefulness of that which I was tempted to do. But outward conformity to the laws of society still left me a prey to thoughts and desires which periodically obtained complete mastery over me. Prayer—on which I was taught to rely as my sole security, so that it would seem almost impious to seek any

other help—failed me absolutely. In an agony of desire to have my mind freed from the obsession of thoughts, so attractive to my lower nature, so repulsive to my higher, I would throw myself on my knees and pray and pray until I had stupefied myself by praying, and had thus further weakened my power for resistance. I might as well have been thrown into deep water, and told that by prayer I could save myself from being drowned.

So my religious teaching led me to exaggerate the sinfulness of the thoughts that haunted me, and limited me to one sole safeguard against them which proved completely useless. The result was that I was reduced at times to a very desperate condition. So completely did I accept the views in which I had been brought up, that it never occurred to me at that time to seek the natural remedies for such a condition—exercise, companionship, wholesome novels and other forms of recreation and mental diversion, as well as the natural development of my spiritual life. I must fight the battle out fair and square, with no other weapons but those of the Christian warfare. It was nearly the death of me. Had I been of a more sociable disposition, with the least tendency to drink, I must indeed have been utterly lost.

There was, however, one good feature of this terrible time which I recall with real satisfaction. After my conversion, Heaven and Hell both had ceased to have any power over me as motives. I no longer sought salvation from Hell but from Sin; and the goal of my desires and prayers was no longer Heaven but Holiness. Satan, who had been such a terribly real personality to me, completely dropped out of my life. I never dreamed of attributing my evil thoughts to the promptings of a wicked spirit, but understood clearly that they sprang entirely from my own heart. Also there grew up in me the feeling that Sin was hateful because it shut me out from communion with God, and Holiness desirable because it was the condition of fellowship with the Eternal Spirit.

And so my religious life was growing very really in spite of the terrible conflicts and defeats that I endured. To be saved from the power of Sin, to live with God and to God, to completely subordinate myself to the life of God within me, to tell others from my own experience of the power and joy of his love in the heart—such became the passionate desire of my

troubled and stormy life. Well do I remember telling God that I would willingly endure any suffering, if I might but thereby conquer myself, and always be filled with the power of his Spirit. But of course such heights of passionate desire could not be permanently maintained; and I fell from them again and again, though they still represented very definitely the permanent aspirations of my heart.

It was the old and terrible mistake of trying to work out any problem with only one idea. Shaken to pieces as I was by the struggles I endured, to go down on my knees and pray, as I prayed, was only still further to exhaust my nervous energy. Yet I am most thankful that, believing in the one idea, I resolutely stuck to it at all costs, until I worked through it, and came out on the other side. It was the best thing to do, the only thing to do. Had I done anything else, I might have become a Liberal Christian. I still feel that, even if the struggle had killed me, it was best to keep it up while I saw no clearer light. If I did repeatedly fail, as was inevitable under the circumstances, I was never long from my post; and I can see now that I was growing all the time. After all, I question whether I have not learned more of life from this desperately insane way of living, than I should have done by living on more rational lines. But I would not like to put any one else through the same mill. It would need the assurance of God himself to do that. But I regret nothing, I complain of nothing; nay, I give God and the old folk thanks. I am through with it all, and shall not have to pass that way again. When I come to die, I shall not have to regret that I have not yet lived.

In the earlier part of this period I spent some time on water-colour drawing and oil-painting, but without any tuition. In the former I made some progress; in the latter my efforts proved hopeless, and, after some foolishly bold attempts, I abandoned it. Some years after, however, I found, hanging on the walls of a friend's house, a small oil-painting of my doing—a copy in colours from an engraving in the ART JOURNAL. But in any work that I have ever done I have never had any of that intuitive skill or spontaneity which arises from natural genius. Whatever I have got through has been entirely the result of hard plodding. In every direction my work has always been slow and laborious, and the output very limited. I have, however, the

faculty of accepting myself and my circumstances, though far from being a Quietist; and I have often consoled myself with the thought that a happy facility for doing things is apt to prove a fatal facility. I believe the best gift that an ordinary man can have is, not so much the capacity for doing things easily, but rather that commanding desire to do great things which slowly but surely compels him to some achievement. There is a quality in work which has been possible only through conquering great difficulties which facile work can never know. It seems to take its place more naturally with the divine order of things, and to co-operate with that order more effectually. Of course I am not speaking of the facility which results from years of patient toil—the Masterhood which characterises the third period of an earnest and laborious life.

Under other conditions I might have had a commanding desire towards Art, and so achieved something in this direction. Certainly I would greatly like to be an artist; but, as I came to see later, the times made that impossible. Meanwhile the struggle of my soul to live was too severe, and my religious convictions were too severe, also, for me to continue long at drawing and painting. The commanding desire of my life became more and more exclusively self-conquest through religious consecration. If I had but known that what I needed was not so much self-conquest as self-development! But I did not know it, and so threw myself desperately into the struggle. I devoted myself more entirely to religious work, taught with greater earnestness in the Sunday School, visited my scholars assiduously, took part in evangelistic services, attended revivalist prayer-meetings.

Meanwhile, beneath this continuous strain, my strength collapsed. Doctors could not discover what was the matter with me. There were no indications of disease, yet I grew incapable of doing anything. On two occasions I spent about three months with relatives in Liverpool, but on returning to work soon became as bad as ever. Before this I had a ten-day trip up the Rhine with a relative. These holidays were a very great gain to me, in enlarging my narrow world; but a gain of which I could not then reap the advantage. Nothing short of a complete inward revolution could save me, and enable me to enter into possession of myself.

But I still had not lived out completely the religion I pro-

[*To face p.* 41.

fessed. I had not yet gone thoroughly through with it. It was the teaching of Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith on the subject of Holiness through Faith that enabled me to do this. Further help came from a growing companionship of thought with the woman I afterwards loved. Also my mind had begun to open to the charms of literature. The first consciousness of this came to me in reading DAVID ELGINBROD. It was during one of my times of physical collapse. I was sitting in my uncle's large and beautiful garden, surrounded by wooded slopes and grass and a profusion of flowers. The August sun fell warmly on me, and the breeze kept me from feeling overcome with the heat. In this lap of luxury, with DAVID ELGINBROD for my more definite inspiration, I realised for the first time, though but dimly, that I had a soul in communion with Nature, and my love went out to Nature, and we began to grow one. This would be in the middle period of my time at Norwich, and before I came under the religious influence just mentioned. This is the only reading that I can remember to have affected my development until a later date, unless the reading of Ruskin's SESAME AND LILIES while in Liverpool was about this time.

The doctrine which Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith revived in the Evangelical Churches was, that as justification came through faith as the free gift of God, so Holiness should come in like manner. If God could justify us, could he not also sanctify us? Must we believe that we were always to go on sinning and being forgiven, only to sin again? Had Jesus died for us in order to produce so unsatisfactory a result? This condition must be put an end to. We were daily dishonouring God and disgracing our profession while we remained in it. God had done his part. What was necessary on our part was the simple acceptance of the gift of Holiness, exactly as we had already accepted the gift of Forgiveness. This Holiness was no mere cloak to hide our sins. It was a condition of actual sinlessness. This meant, of course, absolute consecration to the service of God, and perfect submission to his will. This consecration and submission he would freely give us, if we but had the faith to accept it. There was no trace in it of salvation through works; it was salvation of God's free grace still.

This teaching had a very wide and deep influence on the Evangelical Churches at the time, and one which still has not

died out where Liberalism has not entered in. Of course there were those, on the other hand, who denounced those who advocated it as being guilty of self-righteousness and spiritual pride. None the less there remained the fact that it worked, and that it brought an entirely new joy and strength into thousands of Christian hearts. To me it seemed, and still seems, to follow naturally from the Pauline scheme of redemption through faith. Of course it had a great attraction for me, for it was just from this up and down Christian life that I was seeking to be saved. I never was able to attend any of Mr. or Mrs. Pearsall Smith's meetings, but I heard the doctrine expounded by others, and read a very solid book on the subject by Thomas Upham, called, I think, THE HIGHER LIFE.

After much prayer and hesitation, I determined to make the venture of consecration and faith which this teaching demanded. For the first time I lived wholly and whole-heartedly the Pauline Christian life. I believe that, for people of small intellectual power, of narrow sympathies, and with none of that kind of humour which is a form of mental insight, it is probably about the highest type of religious life possible, and that it makes the most of their limited powers along its limited lines. But it means walking through the world on a tight-rope, and never coming off. Worse still—it means taking absolutely none but a tight-rope view of life. It converts men and women into monsters; but very happy and self-satisfied monsters. Let me not be misunderstood. In my dictionary I find that MONSTER means literally, "That which admonishes or warns," and, after that, "Anything out of the usual course of nature." It is only in these senses of being a warning and unnatural that I use the term—an extreme example of the result of accepting creeds, and trying to run life with only one idea. Don't let us close our TRISTRAM SHANDY. It makes life very complex to keep it open; but very interesting and very lovable too.

Well, I mounted the tight-rope, and to my joy found that I could walk. My friends noticed the change in me, and had joy in me too; though those for whom I most cared deprecated the teaching that brought it about. For the first time I had the possession of that living peace and strength that come from the mastery of any department of life, and this the supreme department of all. For the first time I could live with confidence and

comparative ease. Although I had, at a later period, to begin the whole task afresh, yet, having mastered the problem, as I then understood it, was an enormous strength to me when I came to learn how much vaster the real problem was—that what I had solved was, indeed, not the real problem at all, but only an artificial one, set under artificial conditions, the premises being entirely at fault. None the less, like discipleship, walking a tight-rope is splendid discipline, provided we know when to leave it off.

With this life I never really broke. I grew out of it,—how, I cannot clearly tell. Doubtless the growth was largely aided by love and books. But the experience was unspeakably valuable, the more so that it ended gradually, through natural development, and not in any sudden crash. There was a crash to come later, but it did not drag down my moral life as this would have done. It was only the crash of my religious postulates, which left my moral life still standing up.

The books that I remember to have influenced me most during the later stage of this period were ROBERTSON'S SERMONS, SARTOR RESARTUS, HEROES AND HERO WORSHIP. Also I remember that Browning's INN ALBUM had a strange fascination for me. I read it through three times, but have not read it since. Robertson's Sermons laid a much deeper hold on me. Their extreme humanity and spirituality took me into an entirely new world, and gave what was best within me an atmosphere and surroundings in which to grow. It was a painful pleasure, however, to read them—as though I were putting myself in a spiritual hot-house, and felt within my soul the agony of being forced. Carlyle, also, I revelled in. His splendid intuitive defence of Mahomet must have produced a permanent growth in my thought. But it is wonderful how far such influences will affect us beyond our consciousness at the time. We grow for a long period before we know that we have grown.

A passionate sensitiveness to Music began to awaken in me at this period, and has never dulled since—a sensitiveness to all high and beautiful things, which at times became exceedingly painful to bear. I remember how keenly I sometimes suffered from the emotions called forth by hymns expressive of the intimacies of the religious life. In my office work this artistic temperament showed itself in a lavish use of colour on drawings

of the most practical and commonplace sort. "Trevor's happy!" used to be frequently remarked, when, having completed a drawing, I began to get together the brushes and saucers and paints. But, in spite of my profession, these faculties have gone almost untrained, and have lived in me as capacity to feel rather than as power to do. My art has been my life, and difficult enough.

CHAPTER VI.

LOVE AND DESTINY.

In September, 1876, the five years of my apprenticeship came to an end, with six months added because of loss of time through illness. Mentally, I was restless; physically, worn out. In spite of a higher spiritual development and a wider range of thought —perhaps because of these—I seemed now to have no definite aim in life. My profession did not absorb me, and my temperament was such that I could only work freely at that in which I was absorbed. None the less, I thoroughly liked my office work, and often realised in it the artist's joy. But outside the office I had given myself chiefly to other things; and these other things were opening out into a world greater for me than Architecture—a world in which Architecture was becoming very unreal, very unideal, to me. It was as though I had journeyed until I found myself in a strange land, ignorant of the road to take, not knowing, indeed, whither I wanted to go, but only inwardly urged forward. As one not only lost, but aimless, I decided on the road to follow, guided by new instincts that were beginning to assert themselves.

Thus it was that I decided to go to Liverpool in view of my approaching freedom. Judging what I proposed to do there by what I actually did, I should say that already I was dimly aware of the need of a saner and fuller life; that already the narrowness and unreality of my inward and outward conditions were urging me towards escape. This decision was the first assertion of my real self; but because it was quite unopposed, I did not yet realise how imperious my real self was to be in commanding the course of my life. It was the first step in which no consideration outside of myself—such as that of creed, or custom, or the claims of the bodily life—had any part. So far as is possible to

human nature, it was a free and undetermined act, urged by motive forces far deeper than I then knew, and which I am now only beginning to recognise and understand. It was an act of the self-determined will, and yet of a Will greater than mine, and guided by an Insight clearer than mine, as though co-operating with me towards the realisation of myself, while working at the same time towards its own infinite ends.

And on the eve of this important step, in which I now see a kind of divine partnership, a co-operation with God, just beginning to be set up, myself not yet, or for a long while, able to understand all that was therein implied—on the eve of my journey to Liverpool, on parting with her who had begun to be my companion in reading and thought, I became suddenly aware of the love which thenceforth was to be the discipline, the strength, the joy of my whole life. At parting she gave me the four volumes of Robertson's Sermons, which had so often been the ground on which our minds had met. As our hands came together about the books, my soul rushed across.

Mine was a strange love—of a type not rare, perhaps; and yet as if meant for a world nearer to God than this. Had it been more mundane, it might have been happier for us both. But I did not love for happiness. My real self held happiness in perfect scorn. I had fought until I loved to fight, and could find no joy in ease. It is only in later years that I have learned in happiness still to trust myself, and that happiness is one of the elements necessary to a sane life.

It was my first love. I have said that, in early boyhood, I had already a very high ideal of love and marriage and home. It was natural, therefore, that what I may call a loving longing to love, rather than love itself, had frequently arisen within me. But this was Love—all I had to give—the absolute abandonment of myself. And it came just when I was really taking my life into my own hands; and all my real life went into it. It was truly a religious cult to me, inseparable from all my thoughts of God, and intimately associated with all my communion with him; intensifying that communion, indeed, to a degree I had not realised before. A new Way to God was opened up—a Way of Life, as that of Christ had been to me a Way of Death.

Henceforth I was a dual being, my real self a double self, this double self entering into every department of action and

of thought. A new jealousy of evil in either of us, as destroying the unity of our souls in God, became one of the commanding motives of my life. It is said that Love is blind. Mine was not. Rather it made my vision too intense, my standard too absolute, for both of us. Inseparable from my ideal for myself was my ideal for her, and neither stopped short of the infinite claims of God. At the same time I had never lived so spontaneously from within as I did from this time forward. In every direction my life grew more intense.

The blended way of two souls that really loved—who can tell the true story of all that? In our case I dare not attempt it. It is too sacred. It would not be understood. I do not understand it all myself yet, though light still grows now that it has run its earthly course. Neither would it be right for one of us alone to undertake so great a task. For myself, I need not hesitate to say that there was much thunder and lightning in my love, which years of fellowship with her strong soul did much to tame and humanise. That stern severity, ungenerous in the name of God and Truth, which I think I inherited from my father, has been tempered more and more by the human-kindness, the magnanimity, the humour akin to God's grace, which I believe my mother gave me; so that now I would almost run the risk of being wrong with her I love, rather than right alone with God, in confidence that God would understand and forgive. But then I have been through all the hard discipline of trying to be right alone with God, of making the blunders natural to a mortal who attempts that high walk of life, and of accepting the dark shadows which such a course, followed never so sincerely, must surely bring. In which matter each must take his own lessons, and learn for himself.

Thus, to return to my story, I set out for Liverpool, like some mediæval knight, in quest of a fuller life, with the love of God and my Lady completely filling my heart. My love was truly a worship, springing from my ideal of what the love and fellowship of man and woman should be. I did not ask that it should be returned. Circumstances made me think it impossible that it should be returned, much less be consummated in marriage. It was a pure giving out of myself, asking for nothing in return but continued friendship and freedom of intercourse between us.

In my love, the sensual element was entirely absent; indeed,

this, which at one time had seemed to threaten me with destruction, was now entirely absorbed by a high sexual passion. My own experience, then and later, makes me certain that sexual love and sensual love are entirely separable; and I know that those who cynically assure us that the sensual element in sex love is its essential element, and would have us explain all love in terms of the senses, are fatally ignorant of the higher realities of existence, and just because they have been incapable of the higher experiences.

None the less am I sure that, in a truly normal sex relationship, both soul and body will commune in perfect freedom; but this will only be possible where the body is the vehicle of the spirit. I am also sure that, where this full freedom does exist on both sides of our nature, there love may be the means of making us aware of the presence of the Eternal Spirit as the uniting medium which makes such perfect communion possible. In the passion with which such communion is sought and the joy with which it is found, Nature is not merely luring us on to the perpetuation of the race, deceiving us meanwhile with emotions, the vanity of which it were the highest wisdom to understand. No! Through this human communion, carried confidently and magnanimously to its natural ends, we have the opportunity of rising to the highest consciousness of real Being, of finding ourselves in the very presence of God.

Thus, while I protest against the ignorance and inexperience of those who regard all the phenomena of love as mere emanations from matter, and who, in rightly demanding honesty for the body, are too immature to claim a like honesty for the spirit, I protest equally against those who would deny love its physical expression, and suppress the animal passion which Nature has associated so intimately therewith. The denial of the body is as dangerous and disloyal as the denial of the soul; both denials being equally founded in immaturity, ignorance, inexperience. Half-men govern our thinking too much in these matters—anæmic, emasculated, on one side of their nature or the other. I think Count Tolstoy's KREUZER SONATA one of the most unwholesome and perverting books ever published—a book of mere reaction, because the possible perfect harmony between soul and body has been sadly missed. We have yet to blend Pagan Sanity with Christian Holiness in a fuller Manhood and Woman-

hood—divine in their highest development, and walking with God familiarly as their common friend.

From my own experience I know that there is no necessary antagonism between the flesh and the spirit. Of this experience I may not say much, but this must always be remembered by those who would not misunderstand me—that my love for the woman who afterwards became my wife began as a purely spiritual love, a love as of a divine worship, which came to me when I was first freely setting out in search of a higher mental and spiritual life and work. I had, for the time being, entirely conquered my physical nature, not so much by suppression, as by the development of an absorbing spiritual life. I sought, not happiness, but Holiness, as my ideal end; and carried up this passionate human fellowship into a life of higher communion with God. And yet, step by step, as I have passed on from that life to the life I now live; step by step, as I have come to my present far wider consciousness of God; so, step by step, have I had to learn to give the body a place in my real and ideal living, and to seek for my body the same freedom of life that I seek for my soul. There is no necessary antagonism in our complex dual nature. If any arise, it is because we do not possess the genius to command all the forces within us into a working harmony, which, when formed, culminates in the consciousness of God.

The marriage of the body and the soul; the wholesome discipline of the flesh over the spirit, as of the spirit over the flesh; the emancipation, too, of each by each; the attainment of this divine harmony in us as the accepted end of our earthly life, so that all education and all culture find their aim in that; and then old age coming on, naturally and beautifully, as the gradual putting off of the flesh, lovingly and reverently folded up and laid aside, as the mother folds up and lays aside the little garments that her child has now outgrown; the whole world, too, accepted as the body is accepted, for the discipline and emancipation of the whole man, it, too, laid aside at last, with the same love towards it, and the same reverent gratitude for its use—the full and free communion of life, no part left out, the body taken up into fellowship with the soul, the dual man thus formed entering into fellowship with Humanity, with Nature, with God; our earthly existence growing ever towards this divine

harmony, some chords of it now and again surprising us on our way, the very memory of them being more real to us than the every-day facts of our phenomenal life—have we not here the living realities of a perfectly Natural Religion, in which the ideals of Christianity and the ideals of Paganism blend and merge into a larger whole? And have not both Christianity and Paganism been equally steps in "the education of God" towards this larger life?

At the time of going to Liverpool, I had reached the climax of my Christian life, beyond which it was scarcely possible to go. Already I was beginning, in my very love, passionately spiritual as it was, to admit certain Pagan elements, akin to those which so greatly influenced and humanised the Roman Catholic Church. Hitherto my growth had been towards Christianity. Henceforth it was to be towards Paganism; a growth which my extreme Christian discipline made perfectly sane and safe. For I have never lost my Christianity. There is a real truth underlying the dogma which I was taught to believe—the final perseverance of the saints. No man can lose his past. Once a Christian, to that extent always a Christian; though, it is to be hoped, with so much added as to make the faithful doubt. Certainly they have reason to doubt much in my own case. But the growing oak does not lose its heart, at least until death begins.

At Liverpool, or rather at Waterloo, near Liverpool, where I took lodgings, I had a very queer time, which I do not remember with much clearness. What is certain is, that I then determined, as soon as possible, to turn from Architecture to Literature I read Ruskin eagerly; especially SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE and STONES OF VENICE. My conclusion was that Architecture was quite hopeless in our shopkeeping age, and that he who wanted to be a real architect could only spend his life in so revolutionising society as to make a real Architecture possible. I did not think of social or industrial or political revolution, but rather of a revolution in the whole inward life of the people. Politics had very little interest for me, and I knew practically nothing of them. Being brought up a Liberal, I never thought of deserting the colours; and that was about all. It was the whole of life, as moved from within, that I saw needed seizing and developing, by some artist of consummate power and insight,

endowed with the genius of a more spiritual and creative Shakspeare—one who could grasp the whole range of human development, with its future possibilities, and give the conception forth again to the people in language clear and convincing, because welling up from a new life experienced within.

I should say that, though at this time I was intensely Christian, I was no longer exclusively Christian. Yet I regularly attended the ministry of Hugh Stowell Brown in Liverpool, and was greatly stimulated and helped by his strong human orthodoxy. But my chief stimulants had been only semi-orthodox—George Macdonald, Robertson, Browning, and even Carlyle, having all been absorbed more or less into my Christian life, without any conscious widening, but rather a deepening of it. Now, in Liverpool, Ruskin's influence was overwhelming. Yet I was in no sense his disciple, for I never set myself in any way to follow his teaching. But he informed me greatly, both in Art and Literature, and excited in me the highest mental activity. So painful did this stimulus at last become, that I had to resolutely close him, and have never since been able to read him with real pleasure. In the days of which I am now writing I read none of his sociological works. Coming to them comparatively recently, I found the charm of the Ruskin I had known completely gone, as indeed is almost the case with works that at this time proved most attractive. Especially his mediævalism offends me, and his failure to understand Liberty and Democracy. His influence, both in Religion and Sociology, tends back to the old life rather than forward to the new; and I have no faith whatever in restorations and revivals. Carlyle may seem to some to be open to the same charge; but the man who could write SARTOR RESARTUS, and translate Goethe's WILHELM MEISTER, must have had a far stronger hold than Ruskin on the creative forces of the future, especially in the development of a truer religious life. Better a glorified Dissenter than a glorified Churchman, though neither quite hits the mark.

With these ideas and ideals growing up in Liverpool as in a hot-house, I set myself to improve my education and study literature, trusting that some day I might become a writer. Indeed, I did make one small literary venture, which I sent to Hugh Stowell Brown, in the hope that he might publish it in a magazine which he edited. If I had it by me still, it might

throw considerable light on my condition at this period. For of course it was returned, with the usual advice, put in a very strong and kind manner, and an added warning not to forsake the profession in which I had been educated. All of which had the usual effect on the young aspirant.

Though not quite the usual effect. For it helped me to realise that I had to achieve something before I could say anything—just what, I could not tell. I believed that I had a work to do which one day would justify my abandonment of the profession in which I had been educated, and a work in which this education would by no means be wasted. I understood that I was at the very threshold of my life task, and that it would not do to hasten to it immaturely. Instinctively the conviction seized me that I should have to wait until I was thirty before I could tell what this task was. I accepted the instinct as trustworthy, and prepared to act cheerfully upon it. Nine years did not seem too long to wait and watch and work in patient uncertainty, if only then I might discover my destiny. In the intense passion of my love I seemed already to have achieved something heroic, which gave me confidence that I had a future worth waiting for.

Thus, by the end of the year, I found it natural to return to Norwich and to Architecture. My former employer was willing to have me back; and I had the satisfaction of now earning my living for the first time.

CHAPTER VII.

PHYSICAL COLLAPSE.

ONE of the qualities in which I had been lacking as a boy was a healthy self-confidence. My extremely sensitive nature, not finding a home in the world, produced in me a morbid sense of exile and loneliness and self-suspicion. I was afraid of contact with people, and was painfully aware that I was not liked. Yet I craved affection and esteem to an unusual extent. I well remember, during one of my visits to Liverpool, when I must have been about eighteen, the emotion produced in my mind by being told that a lady, whose house I had visited, had said that she liked me very much. My gratitude to her who said this, and also to her who had enough confidence in me to tell me this, was unbounded. It seemed to be my first introduction to the fellowship of men and women, from which, hitherto, I had felt shut out. If the reader have Hans Andersen's story of THE UGLY DUCKLING by him, let him turn to it now; for therein he will learn much about the dumb misery of my early life, and all that this new experience of approval and confidence meant.

And my great love, both from its own intensity and sacredness, and also from the height on which I placed its object, was an immense lift to me, bringing into my heart a wholly new and wholesome reverence for myself. If, before, I had felt as though introduced to the world of men and women, now I felt as if welcomed to the fellowship of the world's great lovers; for even Dante, I was assured, had not known a diviner passion than this. And, looking back on it now, across half the years of my life, I am gladdened and emboldened by the same assurance still. To no man, I believe, has God given a greater gift of love than mine; though many may well have been worthier of it than

myself. It was all high love centred on one human object—the love of a child for its mother, of a father for his child, of a husband for his wife, of a man for God.

She who awakened this great gift of love in me was some years older than myself. When I had come to Norwich—an awkward, self-suspicious, undeveloped boy—she was already a woman, and had had her baptism of fire, the endurance of which gave her that dignity of exterior which seems like hardness to one who does not know the suffering heart it protects. To be at last admitted as the friend, and then as the passionate lover, of one who had seemed so far removed above me, at so unapproachable a height, was to me a call to fellowship with the gods indeed. In all the doubts concerning myself that succeeded this time, I could always fall back for support upon the fact of this great love, and so renew my faith in my fate.

But this new confidence in myself and in the providence of my life was to receive a sudden shock, which has vibrated through all my after years. God does not leave our growing qualities long unpruned, and it is well for us that he does not. Certainly this admirable growth of self-confidence needs a free use of the knife, not for its destruction, but that it may bear sound and abundant fruit. My new sense of heroism was to be disciplined by an experience which made me feel very unheroic indeed. I had despised the body, I had scorned happiness, and Nature would have her revenge on me for that.

And yet I was just beginning to learn my mistake, and to make amends for my misdeeds. But I sought to propitiate the Divine Mother too late. Then, and since, she has allowed me to go on offending her, in confidence that all was well, that I still had not exhausted her good will, while she has but been waiting until I was entirely bankrupt before she would present her claims. She seems magnificently jealous of the devotees to a spiritual life, demanding that neither shall the flame on HER altar be allowed to go out.

Already I had had warnings, but had learned practically nothing by them. Still I treated my body as a thing of small account. This new passion of love, and the conditions of it, soon co-operated to threaten a new nervous collapse. As if enlightened by love, and the new expansion of my life, I set about strengthening myself, not by prayer alone, but also by

means more commonplace. I was going to describe these means as being more natural; but, to me, prayer is as natural as eating is.

One thing that indicated the unwholesomeness of my condition was, that I still retained a deal of my old nervous dread of the dark, resulting from my old terror of Hell, but now only remaining as a physical survival in me. I do not remember that, ashamed of my foolishness, I prayed to be delivered therefrom. I determined to walk each night beyond the gas lamps, gradually increasing the distance as confidence grew, until I had quite overcome my unreasonable fears. My experience on the first night of this effort was not auspicious. When but a little way into the darkness, beyond the last lamp, I suddenly saw in the hedge the form of a man, in the act of springing upon me. My heart stopped beating. My whole body became rigid and cold. I stood immovable—one foot stretched forward, the heel of the other just lifted from the ground. When I found that the shadow in the hedge became equally immovable, circulation returned, muscles relaxed, and I resumed my walk. Even if I had been foolishly frightened by a shadow, I was not going to turn back until I had completely regained possession of myself. This was the first commencement of a habit I have frequently indulged, of walking alone in the dark and communing with the stars.

I recognised also, at this time, that the life I was imposing on myself was morbidly severe. To further the benefit of my nightly walks, I therefore began to smoke, and have since maintained the habit, not by any means as a permitted fault, but rather as a saving grace. This means, of course, that I have never carried the habit to excess, or even been tempted to do so. The only time when I feel anything like a real craving for a pipe is when I am set down to a regular talk with any one. Then a pipe acts as a kind of buffer state between us, or as a bond of fellowship—just as our relations decide. Some hopelessly gone people talk of the quantity of nicotine that will poison a cat, taking account of nothing else. As though I were a cat! Of course there are people whom smoking injures. Let them avoid. My physical frame is so sensitive that I can quickly tell what harms me, and also what does me good. If I find smoking does me good, where does the cat come in? Happiness and repose are necessary to

bodily health as well as to mental. You cannot separate the two. But happiness and repose escape the chemist's analysis. Therefore all this knowing talk about the cat. The chemistry of human life involves something far more subtle than can be discovered by scales and test-tubes and the cutting up of animals alive.

Moreover, in a really healthy moral life, there will always be a certain element of self assertion, or even of revolt. When we dare no longer be a little bit impudent—quite naturally and simply—we are sinking beneath our prerogative. Man is something more than God's dog. Life is not a Scotch Sabbath. Only a fool will always live by rule. Genius plays fiddlesticks with the canons of the schools. Expressing all this in an extreme form, I have sometimes said, that it is necessary to be wicked occasionally, in order to maintain one's self-respect. It only needs a little of the saving grace of humour to put this element of manhood into its right place; and we should make ourselves infinitely less ridiculous to the gods if we habitually did this. Sanity—which means the omission of nothing—that is what we want.

But those were still not days of sanity with me, though I was now at last learning its need. In spite of night walks and tobacco, the strain that my soul imposed upon my body was greater than it could bear. If I had returned to Norwich and to Architecture, I was still conscious of having a mission to fulfil, though what it was I could not at all tell. I knew that my present life was no expression of my real self, though I rather felt than understood that this was so. It is remarkable how far a feeling will guide us without the help of the understanding, when that feeling results from a fact in the inner life. Urged by this instinct, I renewed my prayer to God, though now in another form, that I was prepared to suffer anything that human nature could endure, if my life might but be of service to my fellow men.

In the limitation that I thus placed on my consecration, I was not thinking at all of the capacity of the body for endurance, but rather of the capacity of the will; and the will I regarded as a purely spiritual force, sustained by the spirit of God. Pain, that did not weaken my power of self control, I regarded as of no account. My sole ambition was to be spiritually strong, and to serve some purpose in life. This granted, I would raise no question as to the cost. I was convinced that the way of high

service must be a way of great suffering; and my past Christian life yet lives in me in this, that I still have the highest confidence in pain. Yet I have now the highest confidence in joy, too; no longer fearing it as I once did. I thank God that I have drunk my fill of both. Only he who can say this can face the mystery of evil with full assurance of faith.

In abandoning myself gratefully to the ideas which the painful experiences of this time in Norwich began to open up to me, I have almost lost the thread of my story, these ideas being now so much more real to me than the events which called them forth. As twice before, so again, I broke down; but this time with a greater collapse, as the burden I carried was heavier to bear, and I had still some heavy arrears in my account with the Divine Mother to make up. My passionate love naturally contributed largely to this result. It was a love so far removed from the common track, that it could not be taken naturally, and expressed openly. An ideal love like mine, without marriage in view, or even demanding like love in return, it has not entered into the mind of Mrs. Grundy to conceive. Verily she has a mind of her own in these matters, and has no wish to be informed. And so a love, perfectly wholesome and natural in itself, grew morbid through secrecy and outward suppression, instead of being healthfully and naturally allowed to grow. My love needed sunshine and the free air, but both were denied. This confinement in a dungeon was Mrs. Grundy's work. All through my life I have had no cause to love Mrs. Grundy; and if I do not roundly call her a fool, it is because I know she is too foolish to understand. From me, indeed, she would accept such an epithet as the highest praise. What can one do, then, but go on?

Morbid fears and doubts grew up in me, and ran their course unchecked. They had no foundation in fact—creatures of the imagination, breeding rapidly in the dark, light and air being denied. And I had no refuge in work. My office work, as before, I liked; but it had no place in my programme of life. Indeed, the great trouble was that I had really no programme, but was only expecting one; and the realisation of this expectation seemed now farther off. My religion, of course, should have unified and directed my energies; but it did not. As in the Isle of Man, so here, my religious convictions, though now

expressed in an intensely religious life, could not concentrate my activities upon one fixed aim. They were simply employed in keeping me going from day to day, but gave me no indication of a way to follow and a work to do. Without knowing the cause, I was suffering all the mental and physical ills of imprisonment in a dark cell.

And the results came which solitary confinement brings. Among other effects, I found the old sensual temptations, to which I had long been a stranger, returning upon me; and I was powerless to drive them off. For the sake of the cynic I must remark, that they were absolutely dissociated from my love. The self-confidence which had grown up in me, the confidence that my high love foretold a high future for which I had been set apart, the sense of heroism and of fellowship with heroes which it brought, all fell away before this terrible assault. The one condition of my prayer of consecration had gone unfulfilled. I had suffered to the point of losing the power of controlling my thoughts. I could no longer reverence myself, therefore, no longer feel worthy in the presence of the woman I loved, no longer believe that I had a mission from God to fulfil. The idea grew in my mind, until it became an obsession, that my life on earth was done with, and that God meant me to die. Under this obsession, I determined to die; and bought poison for this end. So near does the highest life come to the lowest, when ill-conditioned and misunderstood.

If SANITY has come to be the fullest term that I can use to express my ideal of the fullest human life, including the Christian HOLINESS, and so much more beside, the reader will now understand. But doubtless I use the word with a completeness of meaning all my own, including in it all forms of the development of human powers, nothing omitted, all organised into a hierarchy of bodily and spiritual affections and energies, culminating in the attainment of the consciousness of the indwelling love and energy of God. Of course such a conception of life beggars any term I may use. Let the reader avoid limiting my conception by my term. If he have come to the same sense of the fulness of life, and to the same consciousness of its perfect union in God, though by another road than mine, let him use another term if he choose, and not quarrel about terms, declaring that my ideal is lower than his because, for instance, I do not use here a

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Christian word. Such a man has not yet learned the mystery of language and the mastery thereof; limiting realities by terms, so that he puts terms in the place of things; not understanding the patience and magnanimity needed towards finite words when used to express infinite thoughts.

At this crisis in my life, which need not be taken too seriously, I was saved in the very nature of things by my perfect confidence in the woman I loved. With a thoroughness that was characteristic of me, I simply placed in her lap the poison I had bought. Notwithstanding all the difficulties that had beset our relationship, no shadow had fallen between us; and her action at this time justified wholly my perfect faith in her judgment and her love. For now, at last, she was beginning to love me with a love like my own—now, when our fate decreed that we must part.

For it was clear that, for such a condition as mine, only drastic remedies could avail. With the womanly strength which always characterised her love for me, she proposed that I should go to Australia; and it was soon decided that I should go. There was no thought of permanent severance in this, though what our future was to be we could not conceive. I was still but twenty-one, and had yet to learn to master life and the means to live—a dual obligation which I have never been able to harmonise for long, though I still live and work in hope, as now in writing this book, compelled still to place life first.

Thus, in this physical collapse, I began to learn the awful discipline of the body—the spirit rising in lofty claims on life, and attempting heroic things, careless of any pain, only to find the body, itself with a kind of asinine heroism, steadfastly refusing to support the soul, either in its flight or its task. Yet not quite always; for such clearest revelations as I have had of God have come to me when body and soul have, for awhile, found full freedom in each other's company, each helping the other loyally to a fulness of life and joy which neither could have known apart. And I am sure my weak body has largely helped towards the Sanity I prize—holding my spirit in bounds, keeping me truer to things, saving me from spiritual pride, preventing me from becoming a crank, and opening up in my heart that gracious sense of HUMOUR, which, along with SANITY, and with a similar fulness of meaning all my own, I have placed among the gods of my earthly life.

CHAPTER VIII.

COLLAPSE OF FAITH.

On the 30th of August, 1876, I left London on a sailing ship for Sydney. During the short period of preparation for the voyage, I was greatly sustained by that sense of expansion which I had so much needed in my past life. But my real support was found in my religious faith, and in the love now inseparable from it. God and Christ were nearer to me than ever before, and in spite of the deepest suffering, my heart was full of confidence and peace. I am now destroying some mementoes of that time, too sacred for any eye to see, too intimate for any heart to understand. What they reveal is a boundless confidence in God, and a sense of nearness to him, in which all the machinery of the redemption was practically lost—as though, through my perfect human love, I had at last been raised to a height, at which all that machinery had become a mere scaffolding, as it were, to the Temple of the God of Love in which I now dwelt.

I see from these mementoes that this was actually so, though I was not conscious of it at the time. In understanding and in thought I was far behind my actual life. For I have, also, the notes of my last Sunday School lesson, the subject being the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In reading these I am struck with the inconsistency of my teaching. At first I spoke to my boys, in the terms of the Parable, of the immediateness of God, of his accessibility, of his waiting and watching for our readiness to come to him, of his joy in welcoming the wandering soul home, when at last it could understand and crave his love. And then, as bound by my creed, I hauled in the machinery of the Redemption, although it was the manifest intention of Jesus to declare that all such machinery God and the soul could do

without. Of the Parable of the Prodigal Son I made an evangelical discourse, with no sense of the incongruity thereof.

In thought, therefore, I was still an earnest Evangelical Christian, though in life I was rising nearer to God and to Truth. I was not in the least aware of what I have indicated in the previous chapter, that my experiences were leading me swiftly forward towards a rupture between Dogma and Life. Misgivings as to this Dogma I certainly had, but they found no fixed place in my mind. On leaving England, therefore, I had not the slightest apprehension of any change in my religious beliefs. At the same time I had developed a strong instinct for Truth in a wide sense, resulting in a craving for honesty in both manners and thought, which sometimes made my conduct objectionable to my friends. Especially the dishonesty of certain social amenities and class distinctions led me into mild revolt.

For in these early days I had experienced already the beginnings of that terrible conflict between Truth and Love which was to cut so deeply into my life; and already I had determined that Truth must come first, and that Love must learn to wait in perfect faith. It was this that gave such elemental qualities to my love—qualities which, later on, Emerson was to help me to understand. One result of this awful conflict, the facts of which I can never record, is, that I have placed MAGNANIMITY, along with SANITY and HUMOUR, among my mundane gods; but, again, with a meaning all my own. Certainly no person who lives by a creed can quite understand what I mean by any of these terms.

Love of Truth, and confidence in my creed, were both manifested in my first real act after getting to sea. As soon as sickness had been overcome, and I had got my books arranged in my cabin—a large square cabin, shared only by a consumptive young Scotchman, with a great fund of humour which more than made up for his distressing cough—thus settled down in my quarters, I set myself diligently to study the Bible afresh, unaided by helps of any kind, save prayer for the guidance of God's Holy Spirit in the interpretation of his word, and for strength to act faithfully by all that I found therein revealed. It was another act of consecration—this time to revealed Truth, with a sense that the Truth revealed was doubtless greater than I knew. Alone, with no programme, I was going forth to a new world;

yet confident in the consciousness of a mission, which my great sorrow and loneliness would help me to discover and fulfil. In prayer and faith I turned to the Old Book, on which, more definitely than ever, I was determined to build my life.

It was natural that I should commence my reading with Paul's letter to the Roman Church. Actually, though not consciously, the Bible began there for me. In the world of thought, if not historically, it began there—in the light now first thrown on the Old Testament, on the life of Jesus, on God's providential designs running through all the remainder of man's career on earth. I began at the point of illumination in the whole of this strange scheme, into which all the tremendous Drama of Humanity has been forced by the genius of this converted Pharisee, whose thought has since so largely ruled the world. With his strong Pharisaic instinct for dogmatic interpretation, illuminated by an absolutely new thought and life—God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, Jew and Gentile now no longer set apart, man and God now no longer set apart, but all alike united to God through a conscious personal union with Christ, first on the cross, and then risen to the right hand of God; his own personality lost to his own thought through conscious oneness with Christ, crucified and glorified; his aim the loss of all personality in Christ, who himself, at last, is also to be lost in God, who will be all in all; the mighty passion of this new sense of union quivering hot through this iron man, whose bodily presence many dared to despise; all this blazing up suddenly in one individual, and brooded over in solitude until it cohered into a body of doctrine, explaining the meaning of all the mystery of life—this Hero, as if a demi-god, has, in his own person, created the greatest revolution the world has yet known, a revolution far from being exhausted yet.

This man's letter to the Roman Church I now read in prayer and faith, with perfect abandonment to God. It was a sentence in this letter which first brought light to my darkened life—"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." I read on, slowly and prayerfully, past that, past the magnificent eighth chapter, which now again, as so often before, thrilled me with its intensity of thought and life, and then on into all that maze of involved and

subtle reasoning about the rejection of the Jews and the salvation of the Gentiles, in the midst of which, suddenly—as a lightning flash—the thought shot hot through me—"This man is trying to prove true that which is fundamentally false." I see now that Paul made the mistake of all dogmatic interpreters—he did not know where reverently and humbly to stop short. He must interpret everything, account for everything, present his Scheme as one into which everything could be made to fit.

It was chaos come with a crash. I was buried suddenly in the ruins of the Temple I had been building for myself, praying to God that it might be truly built. The disillusion was as complete as it was swift. I saw that everything was lost on which my past life had been built up, and the loss was worse than any sentence of death. My suffering, as I realised what had befallen, and the consequences thereof to others, seemed more than I could endure. Never, in any life, has there been a more sudden and devastating bolt from the blue than that.

But the bolt fell on me while I was walking the path of life with a whole heart. I learned to accept it, if not bravely, at least doggedly, and, in time, not without some despairing hope. I did not feel bitter towards the old faith. I did not despise those who held it. I did not regret the years passed in confidence that it was God's revealed word. It was still the faith of the woman I loved, with a love no longer inseparable from my love and worship of God, but now rent rudely apart, braving the elements like some mighty storm-riven oak, defiantly renewing its leafage as if in mute protest against Fate.

I saw that the whole problem of Religion had to be faced afresh, and with no Bible for my guide. If I was ever again to have any confidence in God, any sense of his presence in the world and in my own heart, it must be built up afresh from the deep foundations of life. And I saw, too, what seemed to add to the almost hopeless difficulty of the task, that the old faith would always remain with me as a memory, by which to test the strength and beauty of the new; that I should never be satisfied with a confidence less sure, a communion with God less close, a life less directed and inspired by the Eternal Spirit. From the first I had a wholesome disrespect for watered down beliefs, make-beliefs, which it has none the less been my fate to come in contact with so much.

It seemed to me certain, therefore, that unless I must conclude the whole Universe a fraud (which is really now unthinkable to my more matured thought, for Reality is unthinkable as false) a still higher life ought to be built up on the foundations of fact and experience than I had built in the past on a creed which I found to be untrue. For it was no mere consistent scheme of the Universe that could satisfy me. After the intense spiritual life that I had lived, the goal of my quest was no plausible theory of God, such as so many appear to be satisfied with, but very God himself, consciously present in my life. I began to be, thenceforth, a Realist in Religion, demanding no romantic dream of Religion, and no philosophic scheme of it, but FACTS, FACTS, FACTS—facts, which would make all dreams and schemes appear mere trivial sport. I was beginning to foresee the revolution that is to be in religious life—a revolution that came to Science centuries since—the lower preparing the way for the higher, as is always the case.

The cleanness of this piece of destructive work in my life, and the clearness of vision that attended it, still surprise me as I look back on it over twenty intervening years. It was a revolution from which no reaction ensued. There was no hesitation in accepting the frightful catastrophe, and yet no self-deception in regard to its character and extent. The past lay before me in sharpest outline; but a deep, impassable chasm had suddenly opened up, which I could not even hope to cross, though she I so perfectly loved stood beckoning on the other side. It never occurred to me to attempt the passage by a new interpretation of the Old Book. I knew now that this Old Book was less than Life, that a Book Religion could never again satisfy my soul, and that this Jewish Literature, on which my life had been built, could never be anything to me again, until I had learned a larger truth and life in God himself.

Verily, I was making tremendous claims on Life—claims that all my past training made to appear very hopeless indeed. Revelation or Nothing—the light of the Gospel of Christ, or the Darkness of endless Despair—the possibility of any other alternative had never entered my mind. But now, at last, there lay clearly before me the lifetask that I had been so blindly groping after in the days of the Faith now lost—to find God with a closed Bible, and then to tell others the way by which I had

gone—in my own experience to enlarge the borders and deepen the foundations of the religious life.

If I saw the whole situation so clearly, and accepted it so loyally, impossible from every point of view as it then seemed, I think it was because already I had grown into a life larger than my creed, though it was an unconscious growth. I think my vague and yet irresistible sense of a purpose that my life was to fulfil implies this. Else, why was not that purpose clearly defined at once as being to preach the gospel of Salvation and Holiness through Faith? It was this gospel which was the sole conscious foundation of all I sought to be. Then why did I dream of a new Literature, of a greater Shakspeare, of a revolution in the national inner life? I may not be able to impress the reader with the fact; but to myself it is evident that, when I went to Liverpool, my creed had already become too small for my growing consciousness; it was already a scheme of salvation into which my thoughts for the world's salvation would not all fit.

Indeed—as will appear hereafter, from a letter written in Australia—when I went to Liverpool, I had already discussed in my own mind the possibility of preaching, and had given it up in favour of writing. The reason I give in this letter is, that I had not the physical strength requisite for a preacher. I have entirely forgotten the fact. What alone I can remember is the sense of a mission which only Literature could fulfil—most certainly of a mission already instinctively realised as larger than that of converting others to my own creed. All the facts show that, though I had evidently then considered preaching and writing as alternatives, my ideas of the end of preaching must have been the same as those of the end of writing previously explained, their combined largeness and vagueness showing them to have already expanded in sub-consciousness beyond the simple gospel of redemption through the blood of Christ. But it is interesting to me to be informed by this letter that, before first leaving Norwich, I had considered the possibility of being a preacher, though the idea was so completely given up that it has left no mental impress.

Certainly mine has always been the preacher's temperament, my view of life the preacher's view, modified, however, by an artistic temperament and outlook, which would never let me feel

quite at home in the pulpit, but as if under protest there. None the less, as the sequel will show, I should be preaching to-day if I had the physical strength for the task, though on a platform of a very unconventional sort. It is this preaching quality in me which has made my efforts towards imaginative literature fail, while its artistic modification will, I trust, serve as a vital salt, to keep my life and work from going conventionally corrupt.

Before the cloud-capped precipice that now fronted me, I again renewed the old prayer—if now it could be called a prayer, when no sense of the old communion with God went with it—that I was willing to suffer anything I could bear, if I might but learn a new divine message for my fellow men. Rather was it, then, a dumb, forlorn casting of myself upon the bare rock of the Universe, with Love bleeding and Faith dead, resolved that, while still not crushed by Fate, I would remain faithful to my fellows and to myself. The sense of a mission, the possession of a boundless love—of these I had not been robbed. Though the Universe had died for me, its Soul fled suddenly away, yet there remained these spiritual gifts, which kept me from quite sinking beneath the sense of the utter commonplaceness which now characterised my outer world—a cheap, painted thing—uncompanionable for me as any wax-work show.

And I had this one unspeakable advantage, that I possessed my soul in freedom—a freedom which more than made up for my frightful solitude. I was among strangers, I was going to a strange land, I need not return home for an indefinite time, if at all. In my new voyage of adventure, I could sail whither I would, with no fear of being hampered by orders from home. Without this freedom, I think I should have died.

Also I was most fortunate in finding one passenger on board with whom I could talk freely about my loss of faith. He was an elderly man, who had lived for several years in the Colonies, and was now returning from a visit to his English friends. Bright, generous, mentally satisfied, absolutely ignorant of the needs of the spiritual life, this good man did me excellent service in the condition in which I was. He discussed with me problems, which caused me the greatest pain, in a light-minded way, which, doubtless, did me much good, helping me towards that complete sanity, or balance, or inclusiveness, which it is so difficult to

maintain in our complex world—save as he obtained it, by leaving out of the account the most real elements of life.

His light-mindedness was that of a man who had passed middle life, had found what his intellect could grasp and what it could not, and had cheerfully accepted the result. There was something charming in this in his own case, because he did not pose as a teacher; nor did he present his conclusions as in any sense conclusive, or as at all commensurate with the sum of things. He said, practically, "I believe I am short-sighted and colour-blind; but I am content to live by what I see, without quarrelling with others who declare that they can see more." So he good-naturedly accepted himself, without claiming to be accepted by others as a standard by which the limits of human attainment could be judged. Throughout the voyage, and during the time of my stay in Sydney, he remained a most generous and helpful friend.

For the rest, I had the ship, the sailors, and my books. The passengers, apart from the one just mentioned, were of no use. Into their ridiculous quarrels I could not enter, and therefore made no friends. It was amusing to watch their vain doings from the main-top, where I lay, rocked by the waves, cooled by the breezes, and sufficiently removed from the emptiness of the life beneath. If I have not become a cynic, I know quite well how a cynic feels. I owe it to the intensity and consistency of my early training, together with a certain inheritance of the blood, that I cannot help holding those in scorn who make life cheap—but not individually—only in the mass. Men and women in their collective capacity I often regard as ridiculous, whom personally I deeply respect.

My books were very good books, but, under the altered circumstances, not much to the point. I read Spenser's FAERIE QUEENE; failed with Cary's DANTE, though I had greatly admired the prose translation of the INFERNO by Dr. Carlyle; became more familiar with some of the Poets, and could make nothing of Emerson, whom I borrowed from a passenger, taking him up for the first time. As a trial of strength, I read THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII in one day, shutting myself up in my cabin, and finishing about half-past nine. It was not my wont, however, to read quickly; and I have never repeated the attempt. I suppose I did it from a wholesome desire, already

growing within me, to try all sorts of experiences. Most of my reading was done aloft, whence I could look around at the heavens and the circle of waters, and gaze deep down into the wondrous blue beneath. And often, up there, I would take from my pocket a photograph, and think deep and sad thoughts. I could scarcely even pray for her now. Yet was there not a bond between us which was of the very stuff of God?

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE AT SEA.

THE ship and the sailors were a great education to me. I have already mentioned my growing desire to lay myself open to all sorts of experiences. During the first week on board, before the crash of my faith, I had resolved that I would live and work with the sailors before the voyage was through. It was almost a reckless idea for one who had had no athletic training; but it was this very fact that made me see that to work with the sailors was the very thing I needed. It was another instance of the extent to which I was unconsciously breaking out. I did not make my purpose known, but quietly set myself the necessary preliminary task of learning to reach every part of the ship. For, of course, until I could feel quite comfortable hanging over a royal yard, or describing ellipses at the end of the jib-boom, it would be useless for me to think of working as one of the crew.

At the outset I had to do a deal of arguing with myself, for I had had no experience to give me the confidence needed for the many and increasingly difficult essays which I had to make. I had to tell myself that thousands upon thousands of boys had to master the run of a ship under circumstances much less favourable than mine; and that what they had to do I certainly ought to be able to do equally well, and equally without fear of danger. In regard to the danger, the doctrine of averages assured me then, and has often comforted me since. Perhaps one in ten thousand, or perhaps in one thousand, might be killed in such a venture as this; but why should I expect to be one in a thousand? We cannot think ourselves the objects of providential spite.

It did not take long to develop the new powers required. To

my surprise I found the swaying of the ship to be quite a negligible quantity. Gradually one difficulty after another was overcome, until there was only one last, but greatest, difficulty to face—the ascent to the main truck, the highest point on the ship. Here I did nearly come to grief. I had been to the top of the Jacob's ladder several times, but the rest of the distance had an ugly look. One fine breezy morning I set my teeth, and determined that I would reach that main truck or drop. The first thing was to swing myself from the top of the Jacob's ladder on to one of the back-stays running down from the main truck. This I managed all right. Then I had to swarm up this back-stay, on its under side, of course, until there was no room for me to go farther, because I was jammed against the mast. At this point came the really trying part. There were two back-stays—one running down on each side of the ship, but both meeting at the top of the mast. I had to swing myself over the stay up which I had climbed, so as to have one leg on the top of each stay, and thus get clear of the mast. Then I had to draw myself up on the top of the two stays, instead of climbing up the underside of one.

It was when I found myself jammed between the back-stay and the mast, and had to swing myself on to the top of the two stays together, that my nerves suddenly and completely collapsed. It was not that I was afraid. Had I been afraid, I should not be writing this. It was simply that my nervous system was over-strained and struck work. I quite understood what was wrong, and simply hung there motionless to give myself a rest until I could resume self-control. Naturally the temptation was strong to slide down the back-stay to the deck, which would have been easy enough. But I was determined to complete the attempt as part of the necessary conquest of myself on which I was bent. Gradually my control over nerves and muscles returned. Then I swung myself on to the back of the two stays, and hauled myself up them until I could place my hand on the top of the main truck. Some may regard all this as a piece of very dangerous folly. For my own part I know it to have been one of the most valuable experiences of my life, especially since I had never had any such education before.

This victory gave me the entire run of the ship. A good deal of practice was still needed, however, before I could think

of serving before the mast. Indeed, it was not until we were down in the "roaring forties" that I ventured to ask the captain if I might occupy, for a week, the berth of a sailor who had died, and work with the starboard watch. I had previously bought oil-skins, sea-boots, a sou'wester, and other equipments, some of them at the auction which followed the sailor's death, the proceeds of which would be forwarded to the dead man's friends. It was a wet and stormy day, and the captain looked much surprised. However, after asking a few questions, he gave his consent. I left the saloon for the fo'castle at the first dog-watch. My friends could quite understand my desire to work with the sailors, but that I should be willing to abandon saloon fare for "salt junk" and "hard-tack" utterly passed their comprehension. Indeed, one man asserted frankly that I must be mad. But how shallow men's minds must be when they cannot understand the infinite difference between sharing the sailors' whole round of life, and merely working with them and going into the saloon for meals. It is such elemental stupidity which makes the world so hard to save.

My week with the sailors was one of the best times I have had, though a hard time too. For we had very bad weather, and very rough food, and very hard work. The constant up and down of the watches I enjoyed at first, but soon I began to long for a whole night's rest—to be allowed, just for once, to sleep my sleep out. But the sailors were gentlemen at heart, with but one or two exceptions, and these were really landsmen who had come to sea. I had some pretty lessons, too. On the first evening I sat down on my chest to eat my supper with my cap on. Presently a sailor came behind me, and gently tapped my head with a "pantile," as the hard sea-biscuits are called. He explained that it was usual to smash a pantile on the head of any one who offended as I had done; but, as I was a stranger to fo'castle manners, he had let me off! There was a German sailor who had a bamboo tobacco-box which he had bought in Shanghai. I asked him to sell it to me. No; he did not wish to part with it. After my week in the fo'castle, I found him one day spitting on this tobacco-box and rubbing it over with his handkerchief—of course fetching off a deal of the deep rich brown which I had admired so much. I asked him what he was doing. He said he was polishing it up to give to me. And he would take no

refusal. I have never been a good collector, or had any love of keeping things, except books; but that tobacco-box stands on my mantel-piece now. Yet it never seems to have regained the splendid rich brown that the sailor so generously polished off to make it fit for a gift.

Let it be understood that I did not go at all out of my way to please these sailors, that I never tipped them or gave them drink, but simply lived and worked with them, and did as they did—though I had to draw the line at talking their talk. Yet I prefer the "Damn!" of a sailor to the "Bother!" of a bishop. I can by no means sympathise with the man who argued that there must be a Hell, or why did God make sailors? If I were God, I should let all sailors into the Kingdom, and give them front seats. More than all my reading in Philosophy, my experience with sailors has taught me the relativity of things.

But the gentlemen's sons, who go to sea as Apprentices, I should consign to the lowest pit. It must have been this sort of boy-gentleman-sailor that the man meant. I admit that my basis for such a generalisation was not broad, covering but five specimens in all; but it was a very strong and homogeneous basis as far as it went. I thought I would put a week in with these apprentices. It was harder work holding out through that week than carrying out my determination to reach the main truck. There was a mean, gross and sensual cussedness about these fellows which language fails to express. As a boy I had strong democratic leanings. I wanted to shake hands with the man as well as with the master, and to raise my hat to the woman as well as to the lady. And now this new experience came to reinforce my awkward instinct.

I have said that we had some rough weather during this time, and indeed we had. It enabled me to feel something of the hardness of a sailor's life. One night the wind rose so high that we had to heave the ship to. Again and again I went aloft with the men to shorten sail, amid lightning and thunder and torrents of rain. But the wind still rose, and our work was not finished until, at three o'clock in the morning, we were hove to under three lower topsails. On the yard-arms curses fell as quickly as rain-drops; but not one fell on any living thing, not even on myself, who must often have been in the way as the men crowded aloft. It was the slippery foot-ropes, the hard

and heavy sails, the obstinate gaskets, or some other inanimate thing, each of which seemed that night to be possessed of a legion of devils, and was treated with the language suited to objects so possessed. Animism still lingers among sailors, even a marline-spike or a sheath-knife having a several devil of its own, or why should it hide itself when wanted, or turn obstinate when required to work? And the language of the sailor adapts itself very naturally to the continual conflict he has to maintain with these innumerable spirits of evil; good spirits, apparently, not often crossing his path. And yet, as I listened to the innocent, childlike talk of that tobacco-box German sailor on cold, starry nights, when I shared his post on the fo'castle head, it was easy to understand that these men had their angel spirits too. For the rest, I can only say, "God bless all sailors, and bring them to port at last!"

I might make a very long chapter about the experiences of this adventurous time—the wonder and beauty of the blue sea, silvering every object that fell into its bewitching depths—the marvellous grandeur and glory of the tropical sunsets, and of their reflection on the crests and hollows of the ever rolling waves —the constant changing of the starry sky, until the familiar Great Bear was drowned in the ocean, and the lovely Southern Cross arose, like Venus Aphrodite, from the deep—the weird and awful feeling of our first calm, the shining and heaving surface of the swell rolling us heavily from port to starboard and from starboard to port, while the sails flapped wearily against the masts —the still more profound impression of our first gale, when the seas lifted our proud ship aloft till, for one moment, we could see a huge distance across the wild mountainous waves, and then tumbled us down the side of the mighty ridge, until we lay for another instant at the bottom of a vast sweeping valley, nothing visible to us but its green and foaming sides—the sudden thunder of the carrying away of our huge jib-boom just as I had turned in to sleep away the forenoon watch—the incarnation of power and self-control which we beheld in the mighty albatross, careering hour after hour in the gale, and never flapping its wings—the strange sensation of leaving our ship in mid ocean in an open boat, and seeing her towers of canvas from a distance occupying the circle of waters alone—the boarding of a vessel laden with sugar from Cibu, two years out from England, and

three degrees out of her reckoning because her chronometers had broken down—the observance by the sailors of the singular ceremony of the Dead Horse, to raise money at the end of their first month at sea—the Sports we held on crossing the Line, instead of the old-fashioned tar-and-feathering, with father Neptune rising from the sea to preside over the time-honoured rites—the Bazaar we had in the tropics on our tented deck, by which we realised £40 for the benefit of three Sailors' Homes—the Sunday Services, the weekly concerts, the dramatic performances, and all the whims and vagaries of the passengers, with the quarrelling and love-making in which they indulged to pass away the time—the songs and chanteys of the sailors, and all their yarns and card playing and painting of pictures and washing and mending of clothes—the strange characters among them—the Butcher with his cow and sheep and fowls, and the song-birds in a hundred cages which he was taking out to sell—the Carpenter who made us a new jib-boom seventy feet long, and set it up with all the rigging thereto, as we sailed the open sea—the poor, raving maniac, who broke out soon after we left England, and lived naked like a wild beast in the deck-house, cursing and raving at all who came near him, and repeatedly tearing off his clothes—the little Irish Doctor, who dissected the dead sailor, and proudly bottled his ruptured kidney in spirits—the good Captain, a model captain, who was courteous to all, but held aloof from the women and all their quarrels, and kept chiefly to a few old fogies with whom he played whist at night—the quaint old Quarter-masters, with whom I occasionally took lee wheel, once during a splendid Southerly Buster off the Australian coast—

But I might continue my bald enumeration all night. I have written it because I want the reader to understand how new and varied and beneficent all my experiences were; and how, during the cruel time through which I had to pass, they all helped me to live. People have said, "You must have found it very dull, shut up three months in a ship." I felt infinitely sad on the morning when first, from the fore royal yard, I discerned the Australian coast.

CHAPTER X.

LETTERS HOME.

ONE Saturday morning the captain announced, that if the wind held, we should see Cape Otway light that night. I paced the fo'castle head with the look-out after darkness set in, every few minutes seeing imaginary lights, my more experienced companion always crushing my hopes. It was not until nearly midnight that the look-out on the fore top-gallant yard shouted down, "Light on the port bow!" Then I saw the difference between the real light shining with a steady glow, and the imaginary lights I had seen flitting about on the horizon. It was much the same experience as I was to go through in my religious beliefs.

After a time, I turned in, determined, if possible, to be the first to see land in the morning. Nor was I disappointed. When I turned out again, daylight had already come; but dense banks of cloud lay heavy on the horizon, making impossible any sight of the distant coast. I ran aloft, however, to the fore royal yard, hoping doubtfully that the clouds would lift. It was very strange, waiting up there alone, my heart answering but too well to the cold grey of the morning, seeking to see a land which I had little desire to reach. I knew that when I set my foot ashore, new difficulties would begin, besides which there would be the unspeakable sorrow of writing home the story of my lost faith. I had kept a journal during the vogage, part of which had already been sent to England by the ship we boarded from Cibu. But this was only the record of outward facts. Of inward facts there was no hint, save what my very silence afforded. During the voyage I could allow my soul to remain largely in a state of suspended animation—a state which, under the circumstances, was doubtless the best for it. But, once on shore, I must begin to live again, in however maimed a manner. The utter blank

that lay before me was appalling; yet I had not lost courage, or even a living faith in things right down beneath.

After long waiting and watching, my patience was at last rewarded. Very slowly the clouds lightened on the horizon, and then gradually lifted. Yes—there could be no doubt about it—I could see clearly the sloping hills of the coast! Land, land, at last! In a few days this strange voyage would be ended. Soon the vision was again beclouded; but I had fulfilled my quest.

It was on the sixth of December, 1877, that we sailed into the magnificent harbour of Sydney, and I first set foot on the new world. The summer had well commenced, and the consignment of real English plum-puddings on board would soon be in request. The weather was beautiful in the extreme. I found excellent apartments overlooking the Domain, and commanding a splendid view of the blue waters of the Harbour. The semi-tropical climate, and the great beauty of my surroundings, did much to enable me to endure the blank misery of my life. "There is no sorrow like lean sorrow." Inwardly, my sorrow was lean enough; outwardly, it was almost rich. I made my little room as comfortable and beautiful as I could, carefully arranged my books, and reverently hung on the wall a picture of snow-clad Alpine mountains which I found on my arrival, with a letter and a small volume of poems from her I loved. How terrible to realise that all the deepest prayers of that letter had no meaning for me now; that the poems had lost all their old power to fill me with strength and peace! But there was the love still there, stronger and deeper for all that now divided us. That was, indeed, a piece of solid rock—one of the deep foundations on which my new religious life was slowly to be built up.

To this woman, whom I will henceforth call my wife, I had now to tell my terrible tale. How she suffered during my absence I never fully knew until after her death. Then I found some of her notebooks, in which she wrote down the dates of events as they occurred; and also, at times, gave expression to her feelings and thoughts. Soon after my departure from England she had written:—"The blank, the almost death-like emptiness, grows more intense each day; but only hold my hand, Father, and then I shall not fail." Such was the sorrow which had now to bear this still more terrible blow.

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I have before me the letter which I wrote on this occasion. It is evident that the emotions with which I had read her letter and others received from home revived in me a good deal of my old confidence in God, though without the least return of confidence in the Christian faith. Long after this I was to find that my religion was still but a fluttering survival of the old life, and not yet the new life on new foundations which I had set myself to build up. Perhaps it is my own experience of the difference between the two that makes me a little scornful about religions which are obviously survivals from the old, with ingenious adaptations to keep them up to date.

After writing of the effect produced by her letter and gifts, I proceeded :——

"All this recalls to my mind that strange time, when the old foundations were giving way under my feet, when all around me of shelter and hope seemed to be driving away. Then my chief pain was the thought of thee. Not yet sufficiently were we separated—we who loved so much—but this, too, must come! At first, as I realised all this, I sought to cling to the hope that it would soon pass away, the dark cloud vanishing, and again allowing the sun to shine with renewed splendour. This, however, grew impossible; and this new fact has to be recorded of us—that thou art a Christian, I an Infidel. For myself, I can only say, I have no fear. One or two moments of this did come, but they vanished instantly. My path is as free from fear of any kind as ever it was. The love of God is still my one hope, service to him my real desire. With these, I cannot sink; and these aspirations shall still unite as in all that is deepest and truest, though the forms which have been so precious to both have now gone from me."

In the same letter I gave some of the reasons why I could no longer believe in Christianity—just enough to indicate that I had not been acting from mere blind emotion. I will not repeat them. English literature contains any amount of argument, both for and against the reasonableness of Christian faith—for the most part useless. I write for those who have already given up Christianity, or who are clinging feebly to it, because they think no other religion is possible. I want such to know that Christianity is only a form of religion, and that they may give it

up entirely, and then find a truer, fuller and more satisfying religion arise in its place. Reasons are nothing as compared with facts—and are very cheap for the most part. So I will omit these reasons, and much personal matter besides, and resume my quotation at a later point.

"Before I finish, I must give you some of my ideas of the future. At present all is uncertain, with this one exception, that I believe a literary life of some sort to be the only one possible. To me it is not so much a matter of choice as of necessity. I *must* do work which has real meaning in it, something into which all my soul can throw itself, and about which all my life can centre. Apart from the desire to be useful to my fellows, I find this work of writing to be the only one which I can hope to follow with success. I must have some work to do, and this alone can satisfy me. It is as though I were driven to it by some mysterious power, ordering my steps for me. . . . As to the way in which my one object can be achieved, I am in great uncertainty. I only know that I have chosen a path full of the greatest difficulties; and yet, on the whole, the easiest one for me. Here there is, indeed, little chance of my gaining anything but experience—of no very pleasant nature, but still useful. My intention is to stay as long as I can, and then go off—where, I cannot tell. At present I am a learner in God's earth, seeking to find here what truth I may, and in the meantime trying to do what good I can. . . . You see, I am not going on the crushing principle. I never did believe in it, except on the very sternest occasions, and then to be paid for afterwards with much interest. . . . I have joined a Free Thought Society here, and am to read a paper. This Society is a poor affair—rather ludicrous, even to me. But I shall stick to it as long as I can, in the hope, not only of learning much myself, but also of giving others a little help. Do not be afraid of this. It is part of my duty, and so I may fearlessly enter upon it."

Upon the receipt of this letter, my wife wrote in the note-book already named:—

"Do help me, dear Father, in this new trouble. It seems to have stunned me, to have taken from me all power of real, earnest thought. It fills my soul, and absorbs me altogether.

The very first verse which comforted me after reading the letter was, 'This sickness is *not* unto death'—a strange verse to come to me in this sorrow, but still it clings. It is a blessed thing to know that so many are praying for him. Oh, that the true light may very quickly shine upon him, and that he may again become truly happy in Christ! Father, comfort him; for we may not. I know thou wilt never leave him. Though the path be ever so dark, thou canst keep his steps, and I do believe that thou wilt. Let me hold on to this belief through all the mists. Now is the time when real trust in God may be intensified. Father, grant it to me, that I may not be afraid."

Few but those who have had a similar experience can imagine how crushing a blow my letter had produced. But faith in God did not fail her; and was to be justified, though in a way not then understood. My letter to her, so far as the account of my loss of faith went, was but supplementary to one I had written for more general reading. From this I will now quote. In so doing there will be a certain amount of repetition of what has already been told from memory. Probably the reader will feel that a somewhat different impression is produced by the two accounts. That is why I have thought it necessary to give both. In writing home it may well be that I did not express fully the suddenness and completeness of the change which had come over me: while in my memory it is quite possible that the suddenness is somewhat exaggerated. However that may be, it was certainly a complete crash that came to my Christian faith, and one from which it never for a moment revived.

"When I last wrote, I was not sufficiently settled, either in body or mind, to be able to give any account of that inner life which is the most important part of one's history, and most valued by those who love us. In my Diary you would notice, I suppose, an absence of allusion to any personal feelings of mine, except of the most superficial character; a reserve which increased as time went on. The time has now come when something more than actions must be recorded, when I must tell you, and others whom I love, what I would be glad to leave untold, if that were possible, namely, of the change of belief which I have undergone since I left England. . . .

"Very soon after leaving London, I was led to study the

Bible more earnestly and candidly than I had hitherto had the opportunity of doing, with prayer to God that he would teach me what that book really taught. I felt that I must study it afresh to find what rock I could there, so that I might stand securely thereon in my new and lonely life. Thus I began reading Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Earnestly and thoughtfully I read on, weighing over and over again the meaning of what I found there recorded, and with this result, that I came to the conclusion, not in the least altered since, that this was not the Word of God as I had believed it to be.

"I found it absolutely impossible to believe that what was here recorded of the ways of God was infallibly true—true beyond appeal. Here, it seemed to me, was an earnest, enthusiastic, noble soul, ardently believing all he wrote, but through it all showing most painfully that his fervour had gone ahead of his reason, and had led him to believe things which demanded a fearful amount of energy on his part to substantiate as the whole truth of God. It is not the writing of a clear-headed, calm man, endeavouring, step by step, to inquire into the truth concerning his subject; but of a passionate soul, striving to make what he believed appear consistent to others. A sea of such thoughts as these, and others bearing indirectly on these, flooded my soul, and quenched all my faith in this as the Word of God. . . .

"It may seem to you that this change of mind is a very sudden one, as it did to me when I was the midst of it. Since then, however, I have been able to look at the matter more calmly, and from a safer distance. I can now see that the change was only sudden in appearance. It had been going on within me, slowly, but surely, for at least a year. I have never, since I first began to think for myself, held matters of faith in any but a tentative manner; have never been afraid to find out the truth at any cost. And yet, as is so often the case, the surroundings in which I found myself prevented me, as I believe, from studying things as candidly as I should have done.

"Unconscious, indeed, as I was of this influence, I can now recall many times when, as I went to teach my boys at the Sunday School, I said to myself, 'Is this, indeed, God's message to them? Is this the way the boys must be saved, otherwise must they perish in Hell?' And I had to spur myself to speak words which I can now see I only half believed—which I had

to make myself believe. The only thing that kept my faith alive was the earnestness with which I lived and worked. I had need of faith. I knew that, without faith, the work would die. I was too busy in action to allow these vague foreshadowings to become definite and tangible. In the hurry of my life I brushed them aside, and worked through them. It only needed freedom from bias to allow these thoughts to run forward to conclusions —freedom from earnest action to give them time to precipitate and cohere.

"An event which happened during the voyage caused me to think very practically on the transition through which I was passing. On the night after the Sports held on crossing the Line, one of the sailors fell from the fo'castle head to the main deck. In less than a fortnight his body was lying at the bottom of the blue sea. From the first I knew the man's life was in danger, because of the constant and copious internal bleeding, and the awful suffering he endured. I went to see him every day, and naturally all the serious thought within me was intensely deepened by my visits. Here was a man going away to God. What message had I for him?

"Not long since, all would have been clear enough, with a certain amount of suppression of doubt, of stifling of truer thoughts. But what gospel had I now for the dying man? This was the result, then, of my state of mind—Silence!—and a brother entering the Great Unknown. By degrees I came to the conclusion that there was no help for it, that I must let my brother die, and not seek to comfort him with what I believed to be a lie. On this I acted, doing a little to show my sympathy with him until his spirit passed away. I had, thus, full soon to face the test of all creeds—DEATH. And I am thankful that I had, for I learned much by it, though I suffered much too. . . .

"Happier thoughts came to me during the last scene. We are not afraid to trust the living with God, why the dead? Does his love for man cease when earth's life is over? If he be the Eternal Love, I need not fear to trust myself or any other in his hands, whether alive or dead. And so, when the dead man was launched into the sea, I felt that he was still in a world governed by a God of Justice and Love, and by no means banished from the presence of God forever.

"I think I have said enough now to show what has been

passing within me during the past three months—enough, at least, to give you and others a deal of pain, I fear. I can only say, Trust in God. He is our Father still. Trust me with him who made me. It is he I am trying to serve, he for whom I wish to live, whatever I may be. In some three months I may expect to know what pain my letter has given. In the mean time I will seek to live my life for the love of God and of man."

CHAPTER XI.

SYDNEY AND THE BLUE MOUNTAINS.

As soon as I had found apartments in Sydney, the gentleman already mentioned as the friend of my voyage generously offered me employment in his office, so that I might earn a little money while I was looking round and deciding on a future course. He was a shipping agent, and my work consisted chiefly in copying ships' manifests. He also invited me to his house overlooking the Harbour, and frequently took me to sail with him in his boat. After a fortnight at this office I was obliged to give up. Day by day I was getting reduced to the condition in which I was before leaving England; although, when I commenced, I felt exceedingly well. It was an absolute necessity that I should have perfect freedom to follow the bent of my thoughts. The work, of course, gave me no mental occupation; and without mental occupation I could not live. All my energies must be bent on my one commanding quest for God. Reading and writing and gaining fresh experience wherever I could—these were the only conditions under which I could exist. So heavily lay upon me the hand of Fate; but I had become used to it by this, and accepted it as the normal condition of my being. My ideal at this time I find expressed in a verse quoted in a letter home :—

> Never hasting, never resting,
> Glad in peace and calm in strife;
> Quietly thyself preparing
> To fulfil thy task in life.

The work at my good friend's office I could not feel to have any place in helping me to fulfil my life task. And so I had to leave. The following extracts from letters will further explain my ideas.

"SYDNEY, *December 23rd*, 1877.

"I am bent on Literature as my only possible ultimate aim. It will be rough, uphill work, and probably the means of causing you all much anxiety. As yet my course is by no means clear, though the object to be obtained is plain enough. I fear I have a head wind, and must tack about for some time. Probably I shall endeavour to get on one of the papers here. If I do, I shall not succeed in the work; but I hope to learn by it. There is nothing to keep me in Sydney long. Indeed, I have been near going off to Melbourne already, but judged it better to learn to *wait*—so hard a lesson for such as I am. Not that I suppose I shall do much better in Melbourne either. You will see that I am by no means settled at present. To-morrow I am off to the Blue Mountains. I don't know what to expect, except that it will be somewhat cooler than here, Blackheath, the station at which I get out, being 3,500 feet above the sea."

"*January 8th*, 1878.

"On Monday, Dec. 24th, I started by 9, a.m., train from Blackheath, the highest station on the Blue Mountains, and seventy-three miles from Sydney. The first station of note after leaving Sydney is Paramatta. The whole of this fourteen miles is more or less studded with villas and smaller residences, and trains are running constantly during the day for the convenience of the inhabitants. Towards Paramatta much wood still remains, with abundance of undergrowth, looking altogether like a neglected kitchen-garden. The district is one of expansive undulations, and where no wood grows it has a hot and sandy look. Beyond Paramatta the scene gradually changes; the soil improves; cultivation is carried on, and orangeries form an important feature in the landscape. The country generally becomes flatter, and through breaks in the bush the Blue Mountains may be seen far away. On the Emu Plains, at the foot of the mountains, much corn is cultivated. At Penrith we have a second engine attached. The view is magnificent, at least to those who delight in the sense of infinitude. Mountain ranges receding into the invisible form the background to the greater part of the scene. The Nepean River winds about on its sandy bed—evidently a very fickle stream. Cattle are grazing on the plains, which are only eighty-eight feet above the level of the sea.

"From Penrith we set off at fine speed, but very soon the engines begin to make hard work of it. We are now ascending the First Zigzag, so called from the zigzag plan of the road. The gradient here is one in thirty-three. The line runs along the mountain side for some distance, then stops, and branches up again in the opposite direction. This operation is repeated several times until the First Zigzag is ascended. As we thus crawl up, the view becomes magnificent. We stop to water the engines, and then continue our uphill winding way, but with no more zigzags. Descending the other side, beyond Mt. Victoria, is the Great Zigzag ; but I did not go so far as that. Of course when I returned people said, 'Oh, you ought to have seen the Great Zigzag. What you went up is nothing to it!'

"For many years these mountains were considered impassable, for reasons which will appear later on. An escaped convict was the first white man to achieve the feat, which had often been vainly attempted. The scenery is very wild. Wood grows everywhere. Even in the crevices of the precipices trees struggle for life. The gum tree is the most common. Its limbs are weird and gawky ; its leaves are sparse ; many arms are white and bare ; and, like all natives, it is an evergreen. Rock appears everywhere in juts and crags. It is wonderful, indeed, how so much vegetation exists on such poor and scanty soil.

"At 1.30 Blackheath was reached. I found it to consist of a platform, and close beside it the Govett's Leap Hotel—nothing else. The hotel is kept by Truth Butts, who went to England with the fictitious Roger Tichborne, and acted as his secretary. Eight sat down to dinner, after which I walked off to Govett's Leap, a distance of about two miles. The walk is through the bush along a rough track cut for the Duke of Edinburgh when he was here. Overhead was the sparse grey foliage of the everlasting gum, giving little shade, and forming but a thin screen in relief against the deep blue sky. Beneath, the ground was brilliant with flowers, though nothing of a tropical nature grows here. In winter it is very cold in the mountains, and that evening I was thankful for the warm glow of a large log fire, though now I was very hot in the brilliant summer's sun.

"On and on I walked over a level track, fearing at last lest I had missed my way. It was scarcely a minute before the Leap was reached that I caught a glimpse of mountain peaks

in the distance. And now each step enlarges the view, until I stand on a jutting rock and look down into an immense valley, bounded on each side by lofty precipices, and rocks covered with trees shelving away at their base until they meet at a stream below. The effect of the scene thus suddenly opened out is altogether indescribable. To the right the precipice is highest, and over it tumbles the fall known as Govett's Leap. Of course a tragic love-story is popularly associated with the name; but as a matter of fact the fall is simply called after a surveyor named Govett who worked in the mountains. The fall is said to be 1400 ft. deep, the rock being as evenly perpendicular from top to bottom as if cut down with an immense curved knife. In a dry season such as this, the stream that goes over the fall is but a small one.

"After a while I got down to a lower crag jutting out more boldly into space, and lay flat on it so that I could look sheer down into the depth. Hundreds of feet beneath me lay the bottom of the valley, covered with trees looking like little shrubs from so great a height. Not a rustle could be heard among the foliage, not a murmur from the stream or the fall, the water of which was lost in fine spray before the bottom was reached. The perfect stillness was awful, as though Nature were being hushed forever in death. To the left of where I was lying was another fall, the rocks forming a precipitous semi-circle of wonderful regularity. These two hollowed precipices, at the juncture of which I lay, form the abrupt commencement of the Grose Valley, whence it winds away and is lost to sight among the distant mountains. The nearest entrance to this valley is thirty-four miles away, so lofty and precipitous are its sides. Such valleys are the peculiar feature of the Blue Mountains, and made them long impassable. The train now crosses by the road which was first found, and I believe no other has been discovered since.

"I lay there gazing on the stupendous scene, until the setting sun filled all the valley with a golden haze, in which its distant lines grew indistinct. The light slowly faded from the mountains. Darkness gradually came on, until at last it hid all the valley beneath. Slowly the stars came out, the night air became cold, and I rose reluctantly to find my way back to the hotel. By the time I reached it I felt uncomfortably cold, notwithstanding

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my brisk walk. My long absence had caused considerable uneasiness. A good supper before a large log fire was a fitting close to the day.

"On Tuesday—Christmas Day—Truth Butts, three others, and myself went off on horse-back, to ride along the edge of the Grose Valley. I saw even grander sights than those of the day before, the valley being here two thousand feet deep, but still with the same leading features of precipices with tree-covered shelving rocks at their base. At 1.30 I had dinner alone, as I left by the 2.30 train. The hostess expressed much sorrow at my not waiting to join them in their Christmas dinner, for which great preparations were being made. By 7 o'clock I was in Sydney again.

"The next day I spent with Mr.—— boating. In the morning we sailed to Rose Bay, towards the Heads; in the afternoon we went up the Paramatta River as far as Hen and Chickens Bay. Before we got back we were caught in a squall. We rushed grandly through the water, but got rather wetter than we liked. Happily the boat was in safe hands.

"Mr.—— has given me an introduction to the Editor of ——. He started his paper with the best of intentions. He was very liberal in his views, and thought he might do some good in helping to make way for such sentiments. After a while he published —— —— from week to week. He told me that he had to give it up, however. Half his subscribers left him. This was his turning point. Now he will print anything that will go; often two articles appearing in the same issue will take different sides of the same question. But there seems to be little principle in the papers here, or in the politics either. They have had four governments this year—1877. After much difficulty another new government is being formed, which will take office on the 22nd of next month."

"*January 13th*, 1878.

"A few weeks back I went to a meeting of the Sydney Free Thought Progressive Society. It had been announced at a Spiritualist lecture by Charles Bright which I attended on the previous Sunday evening. The entrance, I found, was through a shoemaker's shop. The room for the meeting was the work-room, with boards on stools for seats. A paper was read on the

Freedom of the Press, and a discussion followed. The latter was not very encouraging for a believer in *free* thought. There were some twenty persons present, on the whole a fairly sensible lot of men, but not promising much for the future of the Society. I felt almost as though I had got into a Chartist Camp, and had a nervous sensation as though a body of soldiers might attack us any minute. Such feelings by no means arose from the nature of the sentiments uttered, but rather from all the circumstances and surroundings of the scene. However, I paid my shilling, and became a member for a month. At the close a paper was earnestly requested for the next meeting. No one responded, so at last I ventured to volunteer. The subject I gave was, THE PROGRESS OF EARNEST FREE THOUGHT AMONG THE THOUGHTLESS.

"Last Wednesday evening I read my paper. The chief aim of it was to point out some of what I thought to be the dangers of free thought, and the necessity of obviating these. You will readily understand that I did not gain much support for my views; for, as the chairman remarked, it was a different kind of paper from what they usually had. However, I had the right of reply; and as there was no great amount of talent present, I managed to get through all right.

"I have come to the conclusion that I must move once more. In another week I expect to be starting for Melbourne by the overland route. This is not the most comfortable way of going, but I want to see as much as I can of the country while I am here. As to the future, I can say little, except this, that my idea at present is to go on to New York *viâ* Melbourne, New Zealand, and San Francisco. This seems to me the wisest course I can pursue, though I may change my plans on more mature consideration."

My address to the Free Thought Society was a protest against mere destructiveness, with no attempt to provide something better in the place of the thing destroyed. This has been my deep conviction from the time when my own faith fell, that our work in furthering the progress of man must always be constructive, and that whatever destruction may attend it should stand in quite a secondary place. The truer vision, the higher life, alone can supersede that which is less true, less high. Not only so, they

cannot fail to supersede them in due course, when once discovered and taught, and exemplified in those who teach them. It seemed to me painfully ludicrous that these people should suppose that they could overturn the Churches by merely denouncing them, when they had nothing whatever to show at all comparable with what the Churches, with all their faults, could present, both in social and personal life. Let us construct, and leave destruction to the sure hand of Fate.

And I knew instinctively, though I could not state it at the time because of the chaos of my own faith, that all permanent progress must be based upon Religion, and that we could never supersede a false religion until we had discovered one more true; that, however far Scepticism might seem to go in weakening the hold of the Churches on the people, or in chilling the very marrow of Church life, a revival of the old religion would recur again and again, until a newer and truer religion could take its place. Thus early did I begin to recognise this truth, which has since inspired all my efforts towards God, and all my work for my fellow men; and I hold it now more strongly than ever before. The reforming energy of the world must be a new religious life, more comprehensive, more deep, and more true than the religious life associated with that which we wish to reform. We may destroy by other means; we may change the face of things; but we shall not have done more than destroy or change; we shall not have opened up to man a fuller freer and stronger life.

The editor mentioned above promised, at the request of my friend, to give me employment. He commissioned me to write an article, and on a congenial topic. I felt greatly encouraged. I wrote the article, and was rather proud of it. Visions arose. After what seemed a long delay, the article was returned through my friend's hands, with the explanation that its fault was that it told the truth. I saw clearly that journalism did not lie along my path.

During my stay in Sydney I commenced a habit which has been of great service to me. I laid myself open to all influences that had about them any semblance of sincerity, however much I might, at the time, doubt their truth. I had set before myself the task of finding God in life; and I dared not, therefore, shut out any form of life other than that which was obviously of a

vicious and degrading sort. Following this idea, I had joined this Free Thought Society. For the same reason I persisted in attending different churches, though I had completely lost their faith. I felt that so doing would help me to realise what I had lost, and what I had now to make good. It was always a very trying ordeal to me, however, arousing feelings within me, especially during the singing, which at last I could bear no longer. I had, indeed, to give it up on this account.

As already indicated, I attended some Spiritualist lectures in Sydney given by Charles Bright. The theatre was crowded each Sunday evening, which testified to the popularity of the speaker; and, so far as I remember, he was a very attractive speaker indeed. But as for his Spiritualism—! It appeared to me the coldest and deadest Materialism, utterly incompatible with any sort of spiritual life. It seems to me that if you materialise Spiritualism, you get no forwarder than if you spiritualise Materialism, as some Scientists or Philosophers try to do. Between our bodily and our spiritual life a hopeless misunderstanding is introduced, and necessarily with the result of preventing any fulness of growth.

In this same spirit of throwing myself open to all influences, I one day bought a copy of a proscribed book, the publication of which led to the imprisonment of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. I concluded that its proscription, combined with the undoubted sincerity of its authors, indicated that it contained ideas which would have to be reckoned with, though the day of reckoning might be put off. So completely had I accepted the programme of Free Thought. On the question of repression as a whole I have since learned much, but it is a subject too large to deal with here. If, however, people could recognise that everything man knows he has had to find out, and that his chief business in life is to go on finding out, and to master the meaning of what he finds for the purposes of a constantly unfolding life, they would cease to be so stupid and brutal in face of a new fact, and would understand that, if the new fact seems dangerous, what is needed is still further light. But while the conviction exists that there is a special divine revelation which will save man the trouble of finding things out, so long will the powers of Church and State be blind and cruel in their sway, and the methods of God's education be hopelessly misunder-

stood. Darkness will still be preferred to light, and the iron heel of repression will be used in place of the friendly hand of help; while the august name of God will be called upon in support of blindness and cruelty, and of the tyranny of the strong over the weak.

In Sydney I went to the theatre for the first time, and saw plays of all sorts, from Shakspeare to the most thoroughgoing melodrama; but nothing particularly attractive or good. However, it all told as experience; and all helped.

But my time was occupied chiefly in reading and writing. I began then a custom which I long continued, of copying extracts from books I read, and writing down occasional thoughts, indexing the passages under suitable headings for reference. Later I developed this much further, especially marking and indexing every book I read, until I obtained thousands of references on hundreds of subjects—obviously vastly more material than I could ever use. These indexings have been of some service, however, especially when I came to bear the yoke of preaching two sermons a week. But the real use of all this lay in the habit it engendered of recognising the value of all sorts of ideas on all sorts of subjects, in revealing to to me the extreme range and complexity of life, in enabling me to classify an endless variety of ideas, and to note their relation to each other, and how each was like a facet of infinite-sided Truth. The mere method of the habit was also good, especially for one who was to go through such experiences as mine, and whose life had thenceforward to be ordered almost entirely from within.

The books stand before me now. I never use them. For some years I have not added to their contents. But I do not think of the many hours spent over them as lost. Their real worth lives and grows in myself. I cannot forget, too, that there was once a time when, in a season of despair, I feared I should never fulfil my mission in life; and that then the backs of these books smiled on me with an almost human smile, prophesying to me the comforting and strengthening word, that so much labour in faith could never be labour in vain.

Of books I read all sorts. What most deeply impressed me, almost as a new revelation, was Lecky's HISTORY OF RATIONALISM. There are times now and again in our progress when we feel that we need some new book—that all books within our

reach have been read and are used up, and that we need something completely different from all the rest. Such a book was this to me, as DAVID ELGINBROD had been at a much earlier stage—the book I was just ripe for, and that led me into the new world, the verge of which I had reached. I had never read anything like it before—so grand and calm it seemed in its atmosphere of disinterested truth. It was a revelation to me, and a strong hand to help me in my distress.

So, too, I read Buckle's HISTORY OF CIVILISATION, Strauss's THE OLD FAITH AND THE NEW, Coleridge's LAY SERMONS—which I had to give up, with the comfort that Carlyle had written of "Coleridgean Moonshine"—Cowper's TASK, Lytton's RIENZI, F. W. Newman's PHASES OF FAITH, Robert Dale Owen's DEBATABLE LAND—in the hope of finding help in Spiritualism, which I did not, and have never done—Emerson's ESSAYS, Theodore Parker's SERMONS, Carlyle's JOHN STERLING, Winwood Reade's MARTYRDOM OF MAN, the Life of Charlotte Brontë, Izaak Walton, Shakspeare, Shelley, Robert Buchanan, Sheridan Knowles, and so on, some of which I read at Melbourne, but all in Australia. I was, indeed, in a new world, and made the most of my opportunities for discovering new well-springs of life and thought.

I might, however, have carried my newly acquired reasonableness and openness too far. I fully recognised how completely free I was, both inwardly and outwardly, to follow my own reason or my own impulses. All authority had been wiped out for ever from my mind, and all my old friends were far enough away for conventional propriety to have lost its hold. Thus there were times when the life of instinctive virtue which I led came to be challenged by Reason, and I was forced to see that I was practising my virtues over an abyss—for anything I could say that Reason would accept. I did not then understand that, in the drama of human life, Reason may so easily become the villain of the piece. I will give a short scene in my own particular drama to illustrate all this.

I stood one night at a corner of two of the principal thoroughfares in Sydney, and watched the gay throng of people passing to and fro in the gaslight. Why should not I, also, join in the pursuit of Pleasure? Ah, why not, indeed? I had money in my purse, my old friends were separated from me by many thousands of miles, God was no longer an authority to me, and

it was a question whether I should ever find the faith which I so painfully sought. What reason could I give for this sombre life, this severe restraint? What meaning could it have in the new world of thought and action in which I then lived?

And I made answer, "If Reason does really commend such a life, I will live it"— so strong was my new confidence in Reason. And then I began to wonder whether Reason would not commend it after all—only without the extremes to which most went, but rather in that moderation which ensured satisfaction without the after-pang of penalty or regret! And I was so weary already of the dark and lonely fight!

"Yes, I will do it, if Reason commends it—but— I WILL NOT BE DEGRADED." From the depths of my soul that one saving condition flashed up, and put all else to flight. The villain of the piece withdrew, and never troubled me again in THAT form. Although God seemed as far off as before, I had regained possession of myself. So the dark conflict went on, now in this form, now in that, but with sufficient occasional flashes of light to warn me from a false track.

CHAPTER XII.

OVERLAND TO MELBOURNE.

THOUGH my brief visit to the Blue Mountains brought no clear conviction of God to my mind, yet so deep an experience of communion with Nature in her grandest and most beautiful forms must have given me a considerable fund of confidence and strength. The fact that the scene had so stimulated my highest powers must have been a vital defence against the decaying influences that were so strongly attacking my life. Regarding, as I do, the seat of religious conviction to lie not so much in Reason as in the whole Man himself, an experience so profoundly impressive must ever after have counted for much in my long struggle towards Light and Life.

The magnificent displays of Nature that I had so long lived with at sea, and that in some respects I was to have repeated on a still grander scale, doubtless also helped to awaken in me new powers of insight, wonder and love—perhaps the sea more powerfully than anything else. The grandest scenes on land seem to live in the memory as located here or there, separated by vast tracts of unfamiliar earth. Our visions of the sea all arise in our mind set in the one familiar frame—the circle where sea and sky meet. However infinitely varied these visions may be, there is a unity about them which compels us to think of them all as the ever changing manifestations of one vast power, or as pictures painted by one mighty hand.

Thus the sea, however widely travelled, comes to have for us a unity and an underlying personality that the land never has. One scene on land may bring to us this sense of unity and personality, as the wondrous view of the Grose Valley certainly did; but all the many pictures of the sea that live in my memory I am constrained to attribute to one power and source. Sunshine

and cloud, blue and green, storm and clear, tempest and calm, fury and peace, fair weather and foul, rain and fog, vessels, birds, islands and distant coasts—all things seen from the deck of a ship at sea—are one to the poetic heart, and live one undivided though ever-changing life. To me the sea is the one open vision, symbolising more completely than all others the unity underlying the diversity of all forms of life. But at the time of which I write I was not conscious of all this. I was only storing up experiences out of which this consciousness was to grow.

Thus it is that, although, both in Australia and America, I saw some most magnificent scenery, it is only my experiences of the sea that really live in me now as memories of an intimate and loved friend, with whom I have grown familiar in all her varied moods. The Blue Mountains, the Sierra Nevadas, the Rocky Mountains, are acquaintances whom I have almost forgotten; the Sea is an old love, of whom I think with an almost sad tenderness of heart. For though I should sail round the world again, I suppose I should find her a little more cold and formal with me now, as if to indicate that, while she wished to remain my friend, she did not mean to allow our former intimacy to be renewed. Indeed, I have long since found that we cannot repeat our experiences, that nothing occurs to us twice, that we never have even the same difficulties or sorrows to fight through again. I think it is this that gives such an inexhaustible interest to life, and makes us wish never to die.

The time had come for me to again move on. I had exhausted Sydney as far as both my needs and my interest went. So I set off to go to New York by way of Melbourne, New Zealand and 'Frisco. My friend in Sydney urged me strongly to take the Bulli Pass on the way, in order to see some typical Australian scenery, and the semi-tropical vegetation of the valleys near the coast. Bulli (pronounced *bull-eye*) was reached by the Wollongong coach from Campbelltown. The following extracts from letters sent home will give a pretty full account of this journey.

"HART HOTEL, WOLLONGONG.
"*Friday, January 18th*, 1878.

"It is too hot to walk out now, so I will occupy myself with a narration of my doings up to this present. On Wednesday morning I left Sydney for Campbelltown by the 9.45 train. I

arrived at C—— by 11.30, but found the coach did not leave for Wollongong till 7.30. This is a queer spot. Most of the houses are along one road, one storey high, and built of wood. The town has been laid out most methodically, the streets crossing each other at right angles, and being a good width, but the buildings have yet to appear. The roadways are very rough, cut up with water-runs and grown over with grass, except where the bare rock shows itself. The country is hilly. It is cleared for some distance round, and is mostly used for grazing cattle. Mountains form a picturesque background to the small town, and give it an air of security and repose. Aloes grow along the wood fences which bound the roads. They can boast three or four churches, one evidently Roman Catholic.

"At 7.30 I left by the 'Coach,' as they call it, with three raw-boned horses, an Egyptian driver, eight passengers, the mails and baggage. After going eleven miles we stopped at a wood shanty, where the horses were changed while we refreshed ourselves with eggs, bread and butter and coffee. This was at 9.30. The road ran through the bush all the way, and in many places the straggling remains of bush fires could be seen. Though the sky was cloudy, it was not dark, because of the moon. Hence we needed no lamps. About five minutes after we started for the second time, we had to get down and walk up a steep and rough hill. The road was a sad affair, incessantly up and down, at times rough and rocky, then covered with several inches of sand, never level, and mostly very steep. Of course we could but take it as cheerfully as possible, and laugh over the numerous accidents that had happened recently. In some places 'corduroy roads' had been made with round timber laid transversely. This was an agreeable change.

"I had secured a seat by the coloured driver, a native of Upper Egypt, and a very agreeable companion. At various places we stopped to deliver or receive letters, or perhaps to leave a bundle of meat for some solitary road-makers or surveyors camping out in the bush. Stories of bush-rangers enlivened this part of the journey very considerably. After the Bulli Mountain was reached, and we began the downward road, the scenery was grand, though of course subdued by the hazy light. Of this I shall be better able to speak when I see it by daylight on my return. This road is known as the Bulli Pass. At the bottom

of the mountain lies the little town of Bulli, not more than a mile from the sea. I determined to stay here for the night, so as to have the opportunity of looking around next morning. Although we had only gone twenty-seven miles, it was now 2.30, a.m., Wollongong being another seven miles further. We drew up at the post office. I ran across the road and roused the landlord of the Black Dimond Hotel (as it was painted)—a low one-storey building like the rest there. Finding they had a vacant bed, I got my portmanteau down, and bade Egypt farewell. As to the accommodation I found, the less said the better.

"Bulli is smaller than Campbelltown. Most of the inhabitants are coal-miners, or supply the miners' wants. In the morning I went to the coal mine a little distance up the mountain. On the road I had a yarn with the driver of a bullock-team drawing timber. Horses are not so well suited for this rough uphill work. The stolid cattle, eight in number, slowly plodded away, little affected either by speech or whip. The overseer of the mine very kindly accompanied me through many of its winding passages and to the further end of the workings. There is no shaft, but it is entered by two tunnels, and ventilated by a huge furnace. About two hundred men are employed. They use naked lights. The coal is taken to the coast, about two miles off, by a steam tram, the lines being carried out on a pier, alongside of which the vessels load. After dinner I walked down to the shore. In the gully by which I went, bangalows and cabbage trees grow abundantly. The trees here are the largest I have seen in Australia, many of the gums reaching a magnificent height.

"This (Friday) morning I left Bulli for Wollongong at 9 o'clock. I was kept awake most of last night by some drunken miners in the yard which my window overlooked. The road from Bulli runs along the coast at the foot of the mountains, and about a mile from the shore. For my companion I had an American miner, who talked much about the States, and in a glowing style. After reaching here I walked to the Tom Thumb Lagoon—a large expanse of water at high tide, but which was now for the most part a great sandy desert. It has a small outlet into the sea. The view seawards was very beautiful. Wollongong is a small seaport."

"DIXON'S HOTEL, GOULBURN,
"*Sunday, January 20th*, 1878.

"Yesterday morning at 9 o'clock I left Wollongong for Campbelltown by the 'Coach.' This time I was better able to do justice to the beautiful scenery of the Bulli Pass. After passing through Bulli, the coast road is left, and we commence to ascend the mountain. The prospect as the road rises becomes more and more extensive, until, from the highest point, many miles of coast can be seen stretching away far beneath. The foliage is the most luxuriant I have been through, and adds much beauty and richness to the grandeur of the scenery. Tree-ferns grow in abundance, looking so much more natural and beautiful than ever I could have imagined from hot-house specimens seen in England. The bangalow and cabbage-tree give a tropical appearance to the country. Aloes and lilies grow to a great size. Some of the former were in flower, though only a few. The flower-stem rises from fifteen to twenty feet, and the flowers are a light yellow. Grass-trees are abundant, and ferns grow everywhere. Occasionally wild raspberries and strawberries tempted us to get down and walk.

"From out this rich mass of undergrowth, the trees rise to a great height. At one part of the road you can look right down upon all this rich and wild growth, which seems struggling to reach up to you from the depth beneath, while yet the steep rock rises high overhead. Here the tree-ferns may be seen in all their glory, spreading out their huge fronds so gracefully, while their rather crude stems are hidden from sight. Truly they were meant to grow in valleys, and to be looked down upon from mountain heights. If the Grose Valley is the grandest and wildest scenery I have ever beheld, this is by far the most beautiful, and has considerable grandeur too.

"Just before Appin was reached, at the King's Falls, we changed horses and had dinner. We arrived at Campbelltown at 3.40 in the afternoon. At 7.5 I took the train for Goulburn, reaching my hotel by 12. 45, a.m. Goulburn is 134 miles from Sydney and 100 from Campbelltown. It is 2,000 feet above sea level. Little could be seen of the country on the way, save a few bush fires. The land is parched with drought, and further north and west the stock is dying for want of water and food. This is the fourth dry year they have had. This morning I

walked across the hills to a river with some outlandish name. The grass is scorched up, and the river has become a series of stagnant ponds. The trees are cleared for several miles round, and in some places, I imagine, never grew. Mountains form the background in every direction. The landlord tells me that Goulburn has 4,500 inhabitants. There are some good shops, and the main streets are very wide, as usual, to allow the large droves of cattle to pass through.

"You will naturally be a little anxious about the future I propose to myself, after all the change I have undergone. At present the way is hardly cleared up, beyond my intention to go to New York. My mind has become much more settled after recent disturbances, and if I find I can reasonably trust my strength, I think I shall try to enter the Unitarian ministry. From what I have seen of the tendency of Free Thought, I think there is the most earnest need for Freethinkers to contend with the materialism and secularism into which so many have drifted. It is with much pain that I have observed this; and if my life may be spent in counteracting it, it may not be altogether wasted. Economy has been defined as the art of making the best use of everything; and I am anxious to economise myself in this sense, and to put to the best possible use the life that God has given me. One reason why, when I went to Liverpool, I chose literature rather than the ministry, was want of strength. Now that my heart is again finding some definite rest of faith and hope, I return to the old desires, though in another form. But I still may not be strong enough for preaching. If not, writing must do.

"Some people probably envy me in my wanderings. They need not. I get very weary of them, and long to settle down to work, though I am far enough from that as yet. In the meantime I have again and again to decide what to do next. So life is running on. At present I have DONE NOTHING. Well, I think I am learning much, at any rate; and hope that some day these experiences will make me more helpful to others."

MELBOURNE, *January 28th*, 1878.

"At 4, p.m., on Monday last I left Goulburn by train for Cootamundra, where the line from Sydney ends. We arrived at 9.30, having travelled 120 miles and dropped 1.000 feet.

The journey was not of sufficient interest to be worthy of remark. Endless bush, with a few fires, houses, camps, etc., are not matters for narrative. The hotel at Cootamundra was very Colonial—wooden, one-storied, rambling and awkward. My bedroom opened out of the dining room, from which, as from the room on the other side, it was only separated by thin boarding. As considerable drinking was going on, I did not go to bed till late, and then was kept awake for some time. At 5, a.m., I was called, and at six the coach started for Wagga Wagga (pronounced *Wogga*). I had to ride inside, as the box seats were taken. The country was parched, the grass all scorched up. Very few animals of any kind were to be seen.

"My companions were such as one might expect to find in the bush. They had but one source of inspiration—the terrible drought. Those who have been shepherds are mostly intensely silent owing to their secluded and solitary lives. I have spoken to some who seemed to have to be awakened and brought back from some distant land of dreams, and then but a monosyllable could be got from them by way of reply. The life of the bush shepherd is not unlike that of a sailor in one of its aspects, and leads to the same evil results—more evil, indeed, because its conditions are even worse. He ekes out a lonely, joyless life in the bush for several months, then takes a cheque for £30 or £40, goes to the hotel of some little town, hands the cheque over to the landlord, and stops there drinking all the time until the landlord thinks he has drunk his cheque out. Then he is sent off with a bottle of whisky under each arm, and the landlord gets the credit for being a real good fellow. This is what is called 'lambing it down,' and many a cheque must be 'lambed down' which might go to make a man a happy home. Sad specimens, indeed, did I meet of this wretched class at the different places at which we stopped—each dignified with a name as if it were a flourishing town, but usually consisting solely of the hotel where we changed horses.

"The road was very dusty and rough, mostly through the bush, with no fences or clearing even. At Wagga Wagga I found a very comfortable hotel. It is a far prettier town than Goulburn. Trees grow in the streets, which are not so outrageously wide as in Goulburn, though the Colonial main roads are all wide because of the cattle and sheep—generally three chains across, and some-

times four. The town is more compact, the surroundings more cheerful. The Murrumbidgee River runs through it. A neat block of shops in red brick called TICHBORNE BUILDINGS marks the spot where Arthur Orton, *alias* Castro, sold meat to the Wagga Wagga public. Wooden shanties similar to his are still standing, though his is demolished. It is a wonder they did not bring it over to England for a show. The distance from Cootamundra here was fifty-seven miles, done in nine hours. The stages are each about twelve miles. The largest town we passed consisted of three hotels and a store.

"In the afternoon, after a good dinner, I wandered about the town, and saw some new scenes of Colonial life. In the evening I went to the Masonic Hall, where "Alone in London" was performed by a travelling company to a very highly wrought audience. On Wednesday morning I should have been called at 5.30, but was left till 6.30, when the coach for Albury, which should have started at six, was announced to be waiting for me. The distance to be travelled was eighty-four miles; time, thirteen hours; stages, seven. Endless bush, drought, dust and flies, with such bumping up and down! Happily I had a seat on the box, and so my hat did not get crushed by frequent contact with the roof as it did on the previous day. About eight miles from Albury, on the New South Wales frontier, the distant Buffalo Mountains inspired new thoughts. After all, staging is not amiss. Having had thirteen hours of it, I descended at our destination with some regret, which is more than could be said after thirteen hours in a train.

"As Wagga Wagga is prettier than Goulburn, so Albury is prettier than Wagga Wagga. Poplars reminded me of old scenes in the English fens. But the vineyards are the chief beauty of the place, having a strangely joyous look, suggesting thrift, contentment and pleasing toil."—(I hope the pious Socialist reader will pardon this superficial remark, and remember that when it was written I was only twenty-two!)—"The real beauty of the vine I had never understood before, even though I had seen it growing so gloriously on the sunny slopes and terraces of the Rhine. The vine is most beautiful when growing up the poor man's verandah, sheltering him with its leaves from the burning sun. Henceforth the jocund vine will have a new charm for me. —But people get drunk too!—On Thursday I visited Fallon's

wine cellars, where some of the best Colonial wines are made. Then I walked to the River Murray, which here divides Victoria from New South Wales. It was a swift but shallow stream at this part of its course, its bed, however, scattered with huge trunks of trees washed down by winter floods. It is three or four years, now, since they have had any heavy rain here.

"At 2.30, p.m., the bus left the hotel for Wodonga, on the other side of the river, and about two miles distant. The only sign of passing into another Colony was our suddenly leaving the road, driving swiftly past the Custom House, and then on to the road again, while a Custom House official turned out as we passed and gave the driver a nod. A large trunk had been put inside the bus to my great inconvenience and surprise. Now that I understood the reason, I found it less in my way, for had it been on the top I suppose we must have stopped to have it examined. At Wodonga I again took train, with a ticket for Wangaratta, where I was to leave the main line for Beechworth, to see the old gold diggings there. Owing to the visit of a circus to the town, the train was delayed until 11, p.m. We did not reach Beechworth till 1.30, a.m. It is 1,800 ft. above the sea; and for two miles the road rises 1 in 30. With a heavy excursion train, we had only one engine to pull us up. Her wheels flew round, and the steam roared away, yet we scarcely moved. Some of the women screamed to add to the amusement.

"On Friday morning I walked to a tunnel which is being made through the granite under Beechworth for conveying water from the gold diggings above the town. The stream which has been used hitherto has been rendered useless, since they have carried the diggings so low down that the fall of water is not enough to deal with the wash-dirt, although the bed of it has been blasted out a considerable depth to lay the sluices in. These sluices are deep troughs into which the wash-dirt is put. The water running continually over it carries the dirt away, and leaves the gold behind. I stayed to witness the operations of boring and blasting, which are very interesting. It will be two years yet before the tunnel is finished. The work is carried on day and night, with three shifts of men working eight hours each.

"In the afternoon I wandered over some deserted diggings, and had a talk with a man who was breaking stones. He

detected me as a 'new chum,' and was very friendly and communicative. When he was through with his work, he went to his house near by, got a tin pan, filled it promiscuously with some of the earth where we stood, washed it round and round the pan with water from the stream, at each round letting some of the water and dirt flow out, until, in a few minutes, behold a few grains of gold were left at the bottom! Water is the great need here, the fields being entirely stopped for want of it.

"Beechworth is a very pretty town, with some 5,000 inhabitants I suppose. But its palmy days are gone by. The past is worshipped, not the future. The diggings are worked out for the most part, and closed stores show that business is decaying. This is the story all through Victoria—one of the features which distinguish it from New South Wales. The mining is all in the hands of companies, since nearly all the gold has now to be crushed out of the quartz with expensive machinery; and a yield of an ounce of gold from a ton of quartz is enough to keep them going. There is a deal of gambling speculation in connection with these companies, and the sudden rising and falling they experience causes money to change hands very rapidly. Many a poor man here has once had a large fortune.

"On Saturday morning I started for Melbourne by the 7.16 train, and reached my destination at 3 o'clock. The country is much better settled and cultivated than New South Wales. Melbourne, too, is a finer city than Sydney, though by no means so beautifully or so healthily situated."

CHAPTER XIII.

BACK TO SYDNEY.

FROM my first arrival in Melbourne I was unwell, and unfortunately found it necessary, for the sake of economy, to take very second-rate lodgings, the bad odour of which I can still recall. The heat was intense and oppressive, so that I did not go out much, save in the evening. I read a good deal, and wrote much. Diarrhœa set in; I grew very weak, and determined to return to Sydney. But my resolve came too late. Other symptoms appeared which suggested blood-poisoning; and so it was that, on the day on which I commenced to pack, I had to send for a doctor. I was in bed several days, and never felt so lonely, or so near dying, or so wishful to die. It broke me down pretty badly, especially since it caused me again to lose that confidence in myself which was so much needed to enable me to face my destiny. By confidence in myself I mean the feeling that I could rely on my physical ability to follow the path along which the realisation of my higher life and aims seemed to lie. Ever since the collapse which drove me from England, the inability to do this has dogged me. It has, of course, cost me a good deal, but I am sure it has not mattered. I have learned to see that this "thorn in the flesh" has its place in the divine economy of my life, though I still sometimes wriggle about under it, especially when it pricks from some unexpected quarter.

I have long had a very profound conviction that Paul had hold of a solid fact when he said, "All things work together for good to them that love God," though he associated it with his very extraordinary and original Christian dogma. In the consecrated life nothing matters; or, to put it more truly, everything tells. The man with a fixed aim is like the wild barley we put up our sleeves in the afternoon and find in our socks at night. Yet I

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am not exactly an Optimist, at least in thinking of the lot of my fellows; and most certainly I am no dummy of a Quietist either. Only in the background lies the profound conviction that nothing matters, everything tells—in my own life anyhow; and that what I was born to do will somehow be worked out.

We will now return to the letters. The first extract was written after the severity of the attack had abated, and a few days before I left for Sydney.

"MELBOURNE, *February 18th*, 1878.

"I must try to write a few lines this afternoon. This illness was very trying at first, and indeed is somewhat so now. It has shown me how little I can depend on myself, and that I shall probably have to struggle on, as of old, to the end of the chapter. For one thing I am deeply grateful. I have been brought nearer to God, in a more childlike and simple way, than I have known for many a long day. He is more definite to me now, and I feel more assured of his presence. As to fear of death—I have not once felt it; indeed, on two or three occasions I wanted to die—life looked so hard, and the odds against me so heavy. But I am glad to be getting better again, and think I am prepared to carry on life's battle once more as soon as the time comes.

"As to whether I shall ever be a minister, I think it more than doubtful. For a while I felt very hopeful about it, but I could not avoid the conviction that I had not the necessary strength. The day I was at Beechworth I felt very buoyant as I walked about, without being more fatigued than when I started; but in the afternoon my nose bled two or three times, and in the evening I was completely done up. When I reached Melbourne I was quite tired out. Somehow I seem doomed. As soon as I had found lodgings here, I felt that I *must* do something. So I began writing a story that has been long in my mind, and stuck at it as long as I could think. At least the work kept me in good spirits.

"Since I have been here I have had no small difficulty in trying to decide whether I should not go to London rather than New York. I cannot help feeling that London would offer me greater chances of success; and then I am half afraid of the New York climate—so hot and so cold. How I wish I could talk with you all on the subject. But I cannot. Undoubtedly

it would be very hard for me to live in England again. There can be no real communion with those I love best—all is so changed now! I fear, too, that my presence in England would be more painful to my friends; they would realise my change of belief so much more fully. It is very difficult to know what to do. I thought I had decided, and now all has to be gone over again. Oh, how I long to get settled!"

"*Wednesday, February 20th,* 1878.

"I often feel most painfully how little I have done, yet I am in good spirits in respect to the future. My purposes are becoming more definite with experience, and my heart firmer. In New York I expect to have a hard battle to fight, but if I can keep strong I don't feel that I have anything to fear. This fear of weakness is the one difficulty. It makes everything seem so much more complicated when I want to decide for the future. Then there is the way in which my money is going, and must continue to go for some time to come. I cannot help feeling now that weakness has really taught me enough, and that henceforth I *must* be strong, and able to work right away at what I please, living in cheap lodgings, with few comforts, and never spending a penny on pleasure till I have earned the right to do it. I have tried it here, and now have a doctor's bill to pay, and have done practically nothing. Yet all this has taught me much. So it ever is. I learn and learn and learn. When shall I get earnestly to work?

"They seem to be in a fine muddle in the States. This at first rather alarmed me; but I want to learn something of Social questions, and shall there have a good opportunity. Oh, how thankful I shall be to get into the great world once more! Here I seem just buried alive. It will be better there, surely. I don't think I could possibly live in the Colonies. There is no intellectual excitement of any kind. It is like living in a small provincial town, and not seeing a London paper. One never sees a really fine-looking, well-dressed gentleman. I get sick of mediocrity.

"As to being a minister, I must give up that, and not alone for the reasons I have already stated. My mind must be perfectly free to grow as new light comes. I dare not mark out any course of conviction, and say, 'I will follow that.' In a week

the fetters might have to burst; or, worse still, I might find myself in a position in which part of the truth might have to be suppressed. A minister, after all, is hired to intensify the existing faith of his hearers. If he do not that, battle ensues, with various consequences."

Little did I know, when writing the above, how prophetic it was of the experience I should have years after. Still, every calling in life has its temptations and dangers, which can only be avoided by getting out of the world altogether. No position in life is honourable save to an honourable man.

As to the writing which I commenced in Melbourne, my mind has always been too serious and subjective to make novel-writing possible. At that time it was especially out of the question, for I was in the midst of a very hard mental struggle, and I had neither that commanding view of life, nor that easy objective relationship to it, which the novelist needs to enable him to give individual life to his characters. Undoubtedly I was always meant to be in some way or another a preacher, though I have never had the power to succeed in preaching. But that does not matter. There are many kinds of pulpits and platforms, and this that I now have hold of is one of them. And then pulpits are so wanting in humour, and there is such a solemn stuffiness about them. But, for all that, I am afraid to go even into a little village church, and hear even the woodenest of clerical sermons, because I am sure to come out in a state of mental excitement caused by considering how delightful it would be to set up in that very village my own heretical platform, and prove that villagers, even, can be got to understand how great they are, and how near God is to them, and how they should rouse themselves up to live, both personally and socially, to the height of their high calling.

My intention, in returning to Sydney, was to go direct to San Francisco by one of the Pacific steamers, instead of going from Melbourne by way of New Zealand. I had lost so much time through illness, and was getting impatient to bring an end to my wanderings. On Friday, Feb. 22nd, I left Melbourne by steamer for Sydney. It was an uncomfortable voyage. In steaming down the mud-banked Yarra River, we stuck at a bend, and another vessel following us ran into our stern, knocking a

hole therein. There we lay all night to the music of the engineers who were rivetting a new plate over the hole. By six in the morning we were able to leave the Yarra, but our discomforts were not ended. The rain fell, the wind blew, and then, suddenly —the engines stopped. Happily the wind was off the land, or we must certainly have been driven on the rocks. After a long time spent on the engines, they were started again, but only to stop again soon after. The hours passed drearily enough as we rolled helplessly about, the small rags that could be set up being practically useless, save to cause us to drift further out to sea. However, we did get off again, and landed at last in Sydney Harbour at seven o'clock on Monday evening. I may here say that none of my affectionate thoughts of the sea are associated in any way with steamers.

Anxious to make my money hold out as long as possible, I went to cheaper apartments in Sydney than those I had formerly occupied. Ants, bugs and huge water-rats became my nightly companions. It was a miserable time. In three weeks I had three different rooms because of these pests. I was obliged to stay out the week in each case, since I had to pay for my lodgings in advance.

The day after my arrival I went on board one of the Pacific steamers to look at the steerage accommodation which I had bravely determined to take. I found it to be just the kind of accommodation which is provided in a London doss-house, only with less air-space and less ventilation, and we had to cross the tropics. Further, I was told that the passengers would be mostly Chinese. I could have crossed very comfortably in the sailors' fo'castle; but this was too much for my pious determination. Yet I could not afford to pay saloon fare. In this predicament I was fortunate in meeting the captain of a large iron sailing vessel. He told me he was going to sail for 'Frisco in a few days, and after some conversation agreed to take me for £25. We did not sail, however, for more than three weeks. Thus I had the opportunity, already mentioned, of experiencing a phase of Sydney life which had not before come under my notice. It has not, however, wiped out of my memory the exceeding beauty of climate and situation which Sydney enjoys.

My ride across a very small corner of the vast Australian continent impressed me deeply with the conviction that, for many

a year, many an age, perhaps, Australia could not become a great country. Beyond the coast fringe it was a desert, blasted with three years of drought. In Melbourne market they were selling whole sheep at two shillings each. In one of Melbourne's squares stands a fine but pathetic monument—bronze figures of the famous Burke and Wills, who died from starvation in attempting to cross that terrible continent. Before I left Australia, prayers were offered in the Churches for rain, so serious to the whole country were the effects of this long drought. As I left, cattle and sheep were being drowned by floods caused by a sudden downpour. I was told that it was the alternation of long dry seasons and long wet seasons which made the country so difficult to occupy inland. Along the belt of coast it is different. But inland, the free-selector, as he was called, would go further and further during a series of wet years, only to be driven out with the loss of everything when a series of dry years followed. It will be long before Australia can raise men robust enough to conquer such a climate as that; for the climate on the coast belt, however healthy and luxurious, is scarcely calculated to raise a nation of heroes.

In 1877–78 the easy-going, shifty man had the run of things—the man whose sole idea seemed to be to exploit the country for all it was worth. Whether the Labour Movement has succeeded in bringing conscience and consideration for the future into Australian politics, I know not; but only some such movement can redeem her. A truly religious sense of responsibility to God and man was needed to make the most of the country, and is still needed. As it is, its wealth has been gambled for and squandered away with a heedlessness and a selfishness which is nothing less than tragic. If ever the Prophet of Repentance had a mission in any land, in Australia he might surely find it.

Moreover, I am sure that in Colonial life itself there lies an insidious weakness, the causes and effects of which it may be impossible to estimate accurately, but which exist none the less formidably. In Australia I was struck with the shoddiness of everything. I never saw a straight up and down man in the street that I wanted to turn round to look at. It was as though every noteworthy man had been seized and executed. The public life seemed to be on the level of that of some English watering-place, where the ruling passion is to attract visitors, so

that the public man may profit by them in his private capacity. Downright wickedness I can endure better than this slovenliness and commonplaceness, because great wickedness does bring about a reaction at last. As Emerson remarks, "Bad kings help us, if they are bad enough." A country whose affairs are managed by little people has got itself into a parlous state, from which it is difficult to see a way out. It is like a man brought up in an easy-going liberal faith—not true enough to live by nor false enough to be abandoned. Intensity is essential to progress.

It is this frightful mediocrity that Colonialism seems to lead to. When I landed at San Francisco, I saw the difference immediately. The men were smart, energetic, well dressed, with a precision and directness about them as of a tool accurately adapted to its purpose, and with no superfluous metal. They looked like men who knew what they wanted to do, and knew that they were going to do it. On the journey from San Francisco four or five men got on the cars, and I was immediately struck with the demeanour with which I had grown so familiar in Australia. After they had left the cars, a man who had been talking with them told me they were Canadians. I understood at once. It may well be that San Francisco was wickeder all round than any Colonial city, but I had far more hope in it. There was energy, there was life, there was confidence; there was a wiry strength that appeared equal to all emergencies—an integral and self-conscious part of a mighty nation still in its untamed youth, and aware that it had a past to be proud of and a future that would be glorious.

For all this development of power there must be the national spirit. One magnetic thrill of independence, of self-sufficiency, of unity before any outside enemy, of enthusiasm for the flag which stands for the past history and the future mission of the country—this must, from time to time, rush from frontier to frontier, and back from frontier to frontier again, like the pulsing of one mighty heart, if true national greatness is to be realised. It is this national self-consciousness which is part of the stuff out of which the coming self-consciousness of Humanity must be welded.

In a Colony this spirit is feeble and divided. A sentimental regard for the mother country, crossed every now and

again by local interests—this is what it comes to. England will then rise to the height of her destiny, already mighty among the peoples, when her Colonies have learned to become Nations, and have acquired the strong virtues of nationality, and when all English-speaking nations are federated for international purposes, not in sentiment only, but in reality. Independence alone can nourish the collective self-consciousness out of which a still wider self-consciousness must grow.

And I am increasingly convinced that this principle is equally true in regard to the present subordination of the masses to the classes. He who desires to raise the whole level of Humanity—to make Humanity in any real sense possible—must seek to raise its politically and industrially weakest sections into self-consciousness through independence. There is no other way. It is difficult, ugly, dangerous, and very awkward for the ruling interests; yet no other way will work that which we profess to wish to accomplish. Whether we have regard to Ireland, to Labour, to Woman—the same principle of Independence, Self-consciousness, and then free Federation, still holds good; and our eyes and our hearts must be opened wide to this truth if we would be world-workers with God. In a constantly deepening and expanding Self-consciousness, World-consciousness, God-consciousness, lies the real progress of Humanity.

CHAPTER XIV.

SYDNEY TO SAN FRANCISCO.

It was on March 25th, 1878, that we left Sydney for San Francisco. I wish I could call back in clear remembrance the romance of that strange time, which helped me so largely to bear my loneliness, and the burden of my great quest. It all lives in me. Nothing is really lost. What I made my own, by living on it, is part of my present life. But I cannot recall the deep emotions of those creative days; and I wish I could. It seems an act of unfaithfulness to forget what the sea said to me in her wayward beauty and power; and what the sky said, with its new revelations of colour and darkness and light; and so to be unable to tell all I owe to our companionship in those days; and how, brooding over the Chaos of my soul, they began to form therein the germs of a new Cosmos which is still growing. But it is the same with companionships more sacred still than this. The joy of every memory of love is tempered with a sense of ungracious forgetfulness, when we set ourselves to be quite honest with our past.

This voyage across the Pacific was in some respects more impressive than that across the Atlantic. What I remember most clearly of the earlier voyage is a memory of the North—the Roaring Forties, the Albatross, the great gales, the dark loneliness of the heavy sea as we were daily driven eastward. What I remember most clearly of the later voyage is a memory of the South—blazing splendours of sunset, which made all past and all succeeding sunsets dull and ineffectual; tropical islands, towards which, in hours of dejection, the mind mournfully turns, thinking of a beauty and a peace it may not know here, but which there would seem easy of attainment; long calms, beneath the blazing sun by day and the brilliant moon by night, but once in the midst of a dense fog, which clung to us in our dark

motionlessness like a shroud of Universal Death; the shark, the dolphin, the flying-fish, and the large and beautiful insects that visited us as we lay becalmed off the Sandwich Islands; the Golden Gate of the West, through which we sailed, after a voyage of nearly eleven weeks, a ruddy vision in my memory, bathed in the mid-day sun of June.

And yet we had crossed the tropics on the Atlantic; and off San Francisco had lain in a cold fog, among seals and blowing whales. But our memories are impressed by our moods; and if I have more gracious thoughts of the Pacific, it is due to the growth, while crossing it, of a more gracious condition of mind. The coldness of that sudden Doubt was losing itself in a set purpose, built of Hope, if not yet of Faith. I had accepted my fate, I had told the terrible truth to my little world, and already, in the darkness, I had begun to discover the outlines of my future task, and could believe that my early instincts towards a Mission might yet be fulfilled, perhaps beyond my earlier dreams.

In some respects the second voyage had much the same effect on me as reading the second of two books on the same subject. I came to it with an already informed mind; more capable of comparison and of reception, therefore; but with the sense of novelty worn off. Certainly it has not the place in my religious life which the Atlantic voyage has. And yet it has a place far more agreeable to recall. If the first book made me frightfully aware of my ignorance, the second made me aware that I was now beginning to learn. And for that my memory is warmed with a sense of gratitude.

Along with a pale reawakening of my confidence in God, the experiences of this time deepened a certain human sensitiveness which was growing up within me, and which, in various ways, has since so largely determined my development. The last three uncomfortable weeks at Sydney, when I became the companion of bugs and ants and water-rats, and brooded much on the mystery of their existence, and accepted them, and all they stood for, as part of the discipline of life, thus finding a place for them as well as for myself in the new Cosmos I was building—all this, and the very lonely illness and sense of defeat which I had experienced in Melbourne, had had a strangely humanising effect on me, furthering greatly the influence of the Atlantic voyage. It opened

my heart more deeply to the profound pathos of existence, and helped me towards that sense of oneness with all things which is one of the most real elements in the evolution of religious life. And yet, because I could endure these things, and accept the discomfort and the sense of degradation they brought, and find a place for them in the purifying and unfolding of my own life, and feel that, in coming down to the level of their society, I had unexpectedly found myself lifted up, this deep sense of the pathos of existence—"the tears of things" which the Pagan so keenly felt—was no element of despair in my quest for God, but an element of lively hope. It was as if I had gone to the bottom of the ladder of life, and been rendered a very humble and yet very helpful service by the things I found there in the dark.

To learn to feel pity and reverence towards that we must yet destroy, is to have taken a tremendous step in life; for I am sure that the Indian Ascetic, who would remain the companion of these things rather than destroy them, has quite missed the mark. It is always a dual attitude we must inwardly retain towards all the facts of life, though at one time we may be able to give but one attitude its practical and conclusive expression—as when we kill a bug—the reasons for which action introduce us to the whole vast complexity of our earthly life, in the midst of which we have to learn to grow in oneness of heart, and in truth in the inward parts.

My association with the sailors on the Atlantic had already been a great help towards this humane growth. I had no message for the dying sailor; but I could do a little to relieve his pain, and his poverty of things, and his frightful solitude; and could express my sorrow that he should suffer so. My heart went out to all the sailors, too, with their hard lives, their kind and simple hearts, and their many unconscious virtues, hidden from the Pharisaic eye beneath their sins, conventional and real. Now that I was rid of my Christian Creed, I could regard them naturally, from the heart. So I began to enter into the awe and mystery and love of HUMANITY, and to understand what HUMANKINDNESS means—not the mere sentiment of kindness, which even a philanthropist may feel; but rather the consciousness of being of the same KIN, because one in beginning and end, with all HUMAN KIND. It is in this way, by the growth of an inward sense of union, that I have learned that our religious life grows.

The Way of Life, the Revelation of Life—what is it, but going into a ship's fo'castle, without airs, and coming out again with our sense of oneness deepened and broadened? Every advance we make in this direction is an advance towards that God-consciousness, which is the full flower and fruit of human existence.

There is an episode of this voyage which I will record here, since it has a certain human quality, the frank humour of which sends our righteous criticism to sleep. During the calms, one of the occupations of the watch off duty was catching sharks. On one occasion a younger specimen than usual was caught. The second officer assured me that it would be good eating, and asked me to join him in a steak. Systematically open to every new experience, I assented readily enough. While it was cooking, I stood talking with the cook at the galley door. A sailor joined us. The cook drew the conversation round to shark as an article of diet. In dumb astonishment I heard him declare that it was wholly unfit for human food, that it caused violent sickness, and brought out hideous boils. The sailor, at the close of the discourse, turned on his heel, remarking, "Yes, I believe that's about right." Then I remonstrated with the cook. "You see," he replied, "I never encourage the men to eat fish. If I did, I should have enough to do to be cooking for them." Then he pointed proudly to the two steaks which he was frying for the officer and myself, told me just how he was going to serve them, and proceeded to praise young shark as making a most excellent dish.

The shark revealed to me another trait in human nature which, in this instance at least, I did not find so pardonable. During a long calm, the captain daily, and many times each day, swore at the weather like any common sailor, but with an added severity of intention which, by the irresponsible sailor, is scarcely to be attained. He said swear, and he meant swear, in all bitterness and resentment of heart. But one day he noticed a fine shark, lying, as if asleep, at the stern of the ship. He called for his gun. In another minute, where the shark had been, the blue water was stained with blood. During the remainder of that calm no oath against the weather crossed his lips. On the contrary, they wore a placid smile. In the poor shark's blood he had washed out that overwhelming sense of helplessness which had so galled his autocratic mind.

The most original experience of this voyage was having two Sundays in succession. One Saturday night, near midnight, we crossed 180° of longitute. Then we had to throw in an extra day to keep us right with the people who were not sailing with us round the world. The captain—though a brute to his officers, yet always considerate with his crew—declared that the added day should be Sunday, and ordered a second Sunday's dinner to be served. It was very queer to go to bed on Sunday night and to wake up on Sunday morning. One seemed to get no forwarder —as though the Solar System had not been wound up. It was strange enough to have to be continually altering our watches on the Atlantic, thus learning something of the instability of things; but that was nothing to throwing in a whole day on the Pacific. I have always believed that this voyage round the world added years to my life. I know it added a day to it.

In the tropics I sometimes slept on deck, and on more than one occasion was waked by some considerate sailor, who found the moon shining on me, lest I should become a lunatic from the malign influence of Luna's rays. Argument was useless; so if I wished for an undisturbed night, I had to retire to my berth. Indeed, in the topics, I could almost myself feel that there was a certain godless temerity, attended with risk of revenge, in sinking thus into unconscious slumber beneath the cold caresses of the Queen of the Night.

It is difficult not to be superstitious at sea. One is embosomed in Nature so, and so dependent—at least when not on a godless steamer. I could quite sympathise with the sailors when they threw a penny overboard to buy a capful of wind. The sea looked so exactly like a power that only needed to be propitiated in order to become one's friend. But more often the men consoled themselves with the very mundane proverb—"More days, more dollars"; or—when it came to box-hauling all through a watch, in hope of catching every faint puff of breeze —"Growl you may, work you must." Two other proverbs they used on other occasions which have stuck in my memory— "Different ships, different fashions," and, "Wash once a week, whether you want it or no." The last I once thought of using for a text; but it seemed in itself so complete a sermon, that I feared to weaken it by paraphrase.

Genial, humanising influences, all of them, which helped my

mind to open out more and more from its narrow past. And not only to my fellows, and to Nature, but to God also. In my lonely illness I had felt very near to God. This so beautiful universe, and my relations with it, and with her I loved, all the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms—! I could not possibly get all the facts inside such a Scheme of Things as that; any more than I could again get them inside that Scheme of Redemption which had to burst up so violently. I myself, I knew, was bigger than that—even lying ill at Melbourne, helpless and lonely and near death, and suffering so much; yet loyally accepting my fate, and finding in it a discipline towards Life. To him who understands Gethsemane, no Scheme of Things can include all life, though he may still feel as if walking doubtfully in the twilight. At least I had a strong negative faith—a clear limitation in my uncertainty of things—"This world is not dead and demoniacal." And sometimes, in moments of deep feeling, I could almost add, "but godlike." And then I hoped that I might some day say further, in fullest confidence—"and my Father's."

My awaking humanism and reviving faith combined to determine me towards the ministry. There grew up within me a sense of the loneliness and self-sufficiency of Literature as a life mission, and a strong desire to carry on my work, whatever it might be, in association with my fellows. In true feeling I believe I was more really Christian at this time, than at that time in Liverpool when I definitely marked out Literature for my career; for this inseparable association of oneness with man and oneness with God, and of the love of man with the love of God, so that the service of either is the service of the other too, is surely one of the most essential elements in the life of Jesus—an element which, in spite of its dogmatic interpretation, has been a very real contribution towards the world's progress.

Thus I was led to cling tenaciously to that idea of being a minister, which before I had rejected; though now with feelings more truly ministerial than I formerly had. Then, it was the preacher, the messenger, I wished to be—the proclaimer to men of the realities of human life; and I could do my proclaiming just as well by pen as by voice. Now there grew up in my mind a keen sense of man's loneliness and sorrow, and a strong desire to help him in his need. It was rather the personal touch of the minister's life, the sense of being one of a brotherhood, that

appealed to me in that desperately lonely time. So it was that I determined at least to *prepare* for the ministry. The effects of my illness in Melbourne had left me during the voyage, and I had faith enough in God to believe that faith would grow.

For I still understood that the foundation of any real ministry of man to man must be a conscious ministry to God discovered in human life. But how should I ever be sure enough of God to minister in his name? Fitful gleams I had of faith. How was I to rise to that full assurance of faith I had once known? Were not those right who presented the alternative, of Revelation on the one hand, or, on the other, utter ignorance of God and of the meaning of man's earthly life? On what material, in this very complex world, could I ever build up a perfectly invincible conviction of God, so that one day I might learn the Method of religious knowledge?

In this perplexity, a thought flashed into my mind which filled me with the greatest hope. Jesus had had to learn of God, without book, as I now had. All his teaching showed this to be one of the most significant facts of his experience. He had had to give up the Letter, and go straight to Life. It was this which gave such strong realism to all he said, which convinced people that he spoke of what he knew, which made him appeal to them with an authority far other than that claimed by the Scribes and Pharisees, an authority the foundations of which lay in the experiences and emotions of their own human hearts. This thought, unspeakably helpful as it was, did not set me on reading the Bible again to try to give a new interpretation to it; it never made me think that, in a new sense, I might again become a disciple of Christ; it only made me feel that I, in my way, need not despair of attaining to that deep certitude of God to which Jesus had attained in his.

In such a condition, the only religious denomination to which I could look for help was the Unitarian, of which I knew but little. When a boy, I was told that Unitarians did not believe in the divinity of Christ, or in the doctrine of the atonement; that they, therefore, expected to get to heaven by their own righteousness; and that the reason why they were such exceptionally moral people was, that they had only their own goodness to rely on for salvation. Yet, as a boy, I was warned against the Antinomian heresy; while, on the other hand, I grew up

with the idea that it was safer to be a wicked than a moral man, because a wicked man was more likely to be convinced of sin, and to seek salvation through Christ.

At Norwich I had learned something of the good work of these dangerously moral people in the way of education; but I had no more thought of attending their chapel than I could have thought of frequenting a public house. Indeed, I am sure my friends would rather have discovered me in the latter place than in the former, and would have been less hopeless of my future fate. At Sydney, however, I had heard a good deal about them from the friend made on the voyage. Especially I understood that, on seeking admission to a Unitarian College, I should be submitted to no doctrinal test. In such a College, it seemed to me, I might remain for a time, perfectly uncommitted on questions of faith, and in an atmosphere in which any faith possible to me would most naturally grow.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NARROW WAY.

On June 7th, 1878, we sailed through the famous Golden Gate of the West, and I found myself in the city of San Francisco. Here I received letters from England which had been forwarded from Sydney—the first replies to the terrible news I had sent home. The following extracts from what I wrote at this time will indicate my state of mind better than anything I can write from memory now.

"Russ House, San Francisco.
June 10th, 1878.

"There is much, very much, I want to say; and yet it seems difficult to know how to say anything at all. I am so thankful to have received your letters before leaving here; for although they have not altered my plans for the future, yet they have made me go over again, more earnestly than ever, the reasons which led me to my present resolution. It is better, far better, to have done this before taking any steps which might have committed me to a certain course—better to realise now how you all feel about me, than to learn later when it would be so much harder to bear. . . .

"I know that faith in God is man's one need, and I hope to be allowed to help to keep alive that faith in some small spot on God's earth some day. . . . I long to touch the world somewhere, to take my place among others in its work, to enter at some point into sympathy with its joys and sorrows. I have long been sick of remaining on the outside of everything, like a ball tossed over the heads of folk. I trust this sort of life, cold and deadening as it is, will soon be ended. . . .

"You will still think, perhaps, that I should be an Architect. God knows I have had difficulties enough to drive me to it, if

such a course were possible. You will not understand me in this, perhaps; but will think I am making a wish into a necessity. Again and again have I probed my heart to see whether this were not so. But when I fairly faced the matter, it ever remained clearer to me that there were certain things which I could not do, and that this was one of them. . . . My hope has long been that I might preach; and when that has seemed impossible, then I have had to take refuge in writing.

"I called on Mr.—— this morning, and he has given me the addresses of two colleges in the States—one at Cambridge, Mass., the other at Meadville, Pa. . . . As to my views, it matters not what I believe, so I hold a good character. My intention now is to leave this for Chicago the day after to-morrow, and then to communicate with both colleges. . . . The very thought of college seems as good as heaven after all the wanderings of body and mind I have been through. Yet I must not allow my desire for rest to coerce me into taking what I ought not to have. And it may not be as good as I expect, though I must indulge in the hope that it will be, so as to keep the present a little more bright. It is almost unbearable to me, at times, to have nothing but the world about me, and no spiritual being to talk to. Books, and God's sea and sky, have, after all, been but poor substitutes. But it's all good for a body, especially for a body so ambitious as I am. I trust the time is coming when I shall learn to value it from the sympathy and tenderness it will give me in helping others. For the present, I fear, it has often hardened me; but surely there must be treasure gathered in to be of value some day. I cannot think that anything is wasted. . . .

"Thank—— for her letter. Glad, indeed, am I that she did not wait a month before answering mine, for then I should probably not have received it for some three months. Would that I could answer it; but I dare not now. And if it gives pain, yet it gives strength and earnestness, which only pain can afford. In some other part of our Father's land we shall reap the joy of it, when all this will be better understood. And if much we once had in common has now passed away, much is still left—the root of the whole matter after all. In the meantime we are each learning lessons which will one day help us to a fuller knowledge of God's love, and a richer blessedness in our own.

"You ask me what I think of Christ.—'God manifest in the flesh,' as every great man is. Is not the whole earth 'the Living Garment of God'? Christ taught us to say, 'Our Father'; and we find it in our heart to say it. But not only Christ, not only the noble men and women who have lived, not only sunshine and flowers, springtime and the song of birds, but sin also and misery, storm and destruction, cruelty and vice—all must be considered if we would know God. He made all. It is for us to learn of him from all that he has made."

The above extracts but faintly describe the effect which the letters from home produced in my mind. I was becoming accustomed to my new life. The wound caused by the loss of the old faith was healing up. I was hardening myself to remain away from her I loved. These letters carried me all the way back to the sorrow and sense of loss and loneliness that I had been through. It was so hard to bear, that, though I knew it was impossible for me to return to Christianity, I thought that I might, perhaps, make myself go back to Architecture, since such a step would so much relieve the sorrow of those I loved. And I would have gone back—if I could. But the way was barred—all ways were barred, but just this one of the ministry. I felt that a power not to be resisted had laid its hand on me, and was urging me along the path I had to take. Many a time has that almost awful experience been repeated since. I could see many roads before me, but only one could I possibly follow.

I suppose this is what all men who seek to live with God feel again and again in the various crises of their lives. It is as though we begin by asking permission to do God's will in the world, and consecrating ourselves to the doing of it; only to find later that we have been taken so seriously at our word that we have quite lost our freedom. Only so can I account for the exceedingly narrow line to which my own life has again and again been limited, and yet a line of continuous development in life and service. I dance about at times, as though I were a free man; but it is only during some noontide halt on the journey. Suddenly the bugle sounds, and again I must march.

On the whole, one gets accustomed to this way of living; but, for my own part, I am too liable to forget its conditions. This

forgetfulness, it is, that has made the mental strain of such a life tell on me so badly. I will go on scheming and contriving and wearing my brain to pieces in face of each day's difficulties, instead of having confidence enough to go straight forward with each day's duties. But what is the day's duty? Are we this day to continue to sacrifice the happiness of our friends? Are we to go on with our work, heedless of the risk of bankruptcy, or of loss of health, or of calumny, or of foolish controversy? Or are we to let go this piece of work or that, which it seems madness to pursue any longer? How can we tell the difference between faith and folly, between our vain imaginings, and the true insight which refuses to be blinded by the external show of things?

There is no answer to these questionings but the answer that each man's character, experience and training enable him to give as each new difficulty or complication of difficulties arises. But I am sure we ought to recognise more than we do the need of disciplining ourselves in this matter, so that time and strength are not wasted in turning over all sorts of reasons for this course or that; but that we should be able instinctively to see the right path each time several paths open before us. It is the Art of living and working with God that we have to learn by continued experience in doing it. And yet, if we are called to carry forward a work for which we have not the physical strength, or in some other way are commanded to make bricks without straw, then we must expect complications of difficulties, and must not be discouraged if they often stagger us. Each of us has to learn how to play his part in this matter; but certainly it should be his aim to train himself to carry on his work quietly under fire; and, once having taken up a position, to stick to it, until he gets his clear marching orders. ARS LONGA, VITA BREVIS EST, wrote my old schoolmaster; and it is even so. And this life appears but a very elementary school to prepare us for a higher; where, if the Art be long, the Life shall be long also.

This burden of God's presence is no new matter. All through the prophetic Jewish literature we find how keenly, and sometimes awfully, men felt it. People laugh at the story of Jonah; but that story shows more knowledge of the bottom realities of life than those who simply laugh at it could dream of. Read the 139th Psalm. You will find some verses towards the end which are open enough to criticism; but what man who ever realised

the pressure of God all around him as the writer of this Psalm did, would not feel instinctively that they had been inserted by some other hand, and simply read past them to the end? Pass on from the eighteenth verse to the twenty-third; read the whole Psalm thus; and then see whether you can enter into all the complex thought and activity of this end of the Nineteenth Century, and feel God weighing down upon it all, and guiding you through it all, as the Psalmist felt respecting the little world in which he lived. If not, you are not keeping up with the progress of the world.

The fact is, the problem of life seems to be growing more complex at a rate greater than that at which man himself is growing. It was possible for a Jewish Prophet to grasp life as a whole, with God all around and within it, just as it was possible for Aristotle to grasp all Science as a whole, and write all that could then be known of its branches. The only way for man to keep up with the march of the world is for him to set the Art of Living with God first before him as the one necessary attainment from which all else must emanate, and then all the knowledge and experience and skill which he can acquire will be unified around this one Divine Art of Life as its centre, all blessing and benefiting the whole of Humankind. Only then shall we be able to command for human weal the tremendous forces that we discover and handle; only then shall we be rid of these awful prophecies of aërial armaments and electrical death-zones which now haunt our godless imaginations. I repeat —only when all the activities of life radiate from a life lived with God can we possibly command all human knowledge and power to the common end of human well-being. Only so can be realised any sort of Kingdom of God on Earth.

All this I was beginning to learn at the Russ House in San Francisco, where I had that hard struggle over my letters from England. For the sake of those who sent them, and all whom they represented, I would renounce my plans, return to Architecture, and thus show that reasonable regard for my worldly welfare which would give them the greater hope for my spiritual well-being. Not that I put it in quite that form to myself, for I did not then recognise how strangely Orthodoxy and getting on were associated. I only recognised that such an act would be regarded as indicative of stability of character. But stability in

stagnation is one thing, stability in development another. I have had to learn, from my own experience, that change does not necessarily mean changeability. My real business, at any rate, was to grow, and to steadily pursue my quest.

And, indeed, if one realises what may be done in the short span of our earthly life—what must be done, indeed, if our brief existence here is to yield any adequate fruitage—there must be much continual changing of some sort. We appear on the scene in utter ignorance; the things we are told we have to take on trust; especially those that go deepest. We have to live and learn and think and do so strenuously, that, in some forty years, we shall have discovered and verified the first elements of our relations with our fellows, with Nature, with God. I say, in forty years; because few are capable of making new departures after that. By forty the lines must be laid down along which further development must go. What wonder, then, if we must frequently strike our tents and march?

Later on I did return to Architecture, when my life became more complex, and new considerations arose which made that step inevitable. It was a severe discipline, indeed; but one which was worth much; though, while it lasted, I could not see its worth. For the present, in spite of all I felt, I was destined to keep along the path I had marked out, and knew that it was useless to resist my fate. So, with a heavy heart for those at home, I finally renounced Architecture as being, in any sense, a Way of Life for me.

About three months after this decision, I wrote, in reference to it, "I must keep going. I dare not stand still. There are times when I could hardly live at all did I not have the assurance that my life was not stagnant, that it would one day be helpful, that the work I was doing had some other object than earning a living. It is the way I was put together, and I must act in accordance with what I am."

The dual consciousness of Self-determination and of Fate which I experienced at this time, no Philosophy can account for or reconcile. The Necessarian Philosophy and the Libertarian equally fail us here. There are the facts; and the reconciliation of these facts is a most important branch of the Art of Life. No one can reconcile them for us. We must do it for ourselves. No theory can explain the facts. We must come into immediate contact

with them, and work with them, and wrestle with them, until, in our own living, some harmony of them has been practically realised. In so doing we shall learn that we are much too great to be able quite to understand ourselves.

For my own part, looking back on my life from the time when I left Norwich for Liverpool, the time when I first began to live really from within, and to take in hand the direction of my own living—looking back from the time when first my own Will began to clearly assert itself, and I began to cast off the leading of convention and creed—along with a growing Self-determination and Self-realisation, I see also a growing Necessity closing in the lines of my life, until, at the present moment, I find my way narrowed down, hedged in, as it never before has been. That is in the practical life, in the midst of this show of things. In the deeper and more real life, a sense of boundlessness has come, which makes me accept the thorn hedge good-naturedly, because I know it cannot last, being only a discipline to enable me, among other things, to learn what boundlessness means.

CHAPTER XVI.

SAN FRANCISCO TO MEADVILLE.

THE journey from San Francisco to Chicago on the emigrant train was one of my finest experiences of travel, and vastly more interesting than if I had gone by express. We went much more slowly, and stopped much more frequently; so that we had far better opportunities for looking about, and coming in contact with things. It was an exciting time then in the Western States. In San Francisco the working men were arming and drilling to fight against the cheap labour of the Chinese; and along the line an Indian tribe was on the war path, and soldiers were gathering for a fight. The scenery on crossing the Sierra Nevadas and the Rocky Mountains was impressively grand, the vastest view that lives in my memory being that from the highest point where we crossed the Rockies, its grandeur enhanced by a thunderstorm going forward along the summits of the distant snow-clad mountains. In Nevada I stayed a day, and saw something very real of the Western Miner's life We ran through many miles of snow-sheds where the snow lay deep in June, crossed the Great American Desert, passed along the shore of the Great Salt Lake, rode through the Devil's Gate and Echo Canyon, spent two days in crossing the rolling prairies, and, after nine days and nights of travelling, had a night in bed at Omaha. Thence we went by express train to Chicago, and had no more fun. We were no longer allowed to roam about the cars at will, as we were before, even to riding on the top; we had no long stoppages, and no time to see things, and gradually lost all interest in the journey the nearer civilisation was approached.

On Sunday evening, June 23rd, we reached Chicago, after an eleven days' ride. I only remained three days in the city, but some personal memories still live in my heart. I had letters

of introduction to Dr. Brooke Herford and Dr. Robert Collyer, both Englishmen, and Unitarian ministers in Chicago. How kind they were to me, and how cheering their kindness was! Robert Collyer used to be a Yorkshire blacksmith, and was a good Yorkshireman still. First he became a Methodist minister, and then Unitarian. Some old friends gave him, years since, the anvil on which he used to work. And there he was at his anvil, working on it still, pen in hand. At first he made me feel like an intruder; said "Yes," and "Oh!" until, like Artemus Ward on the canal boat, "I wished I hadn't come." Then he said, "Do you smoke?" "Yes." "Then we'll sit and talk over a cigar. Pull up that chair. Now, tell me, how are things going in Australia?" Then we sailed along. I suppose those two cigars contained more than the proverbial two drops of nicotine that would poison a cat. Anyway on that occasion they laid a sympathetic track, along which one of the strongest and tenderest of hearts came to the help of a very lonely and unhappy one.

In Chicago I gained the information I sought about the Colleges at Cambridge and Meadville. The educational requirements at Cambridge were quite beyond me, because my education had been so early cut short—at least that kind of education which colleges can recognise. Therefore I decided to go to Meadville, where the curriculum was not so exacting, and where I could make good my shortcomings in Latin and Greek. On June 26th I left Chicago, and reached Meadville, in the North West corner of Pennsylvania, the next day. In the evening I called on the President of the College, Dr. Livermore, in whom I found the most perfect gentleman I can remember ever to have met. It was a type of gentility quite new to me; and made me, for the first time, fully understand what is implied in that term. He was perfectly simple, perfectly natural, perfectly honest, perfectly kind; and I felt all this, and more, the moment he offered me his hand. There was an inward grace and beauty shining through the face and expressed in the demeanour of that man that I shall never forget. You felt that he must have been made just like that; and yet you felt, too, that he had had his sorrows and his difficulties and his disciplines, which had given him such perfect possession of himself, that the self was kept just in its right place. It was an art that hid the art.

The other two Professors at the College were gentlemen of much the same type—all three patient, genial, unwearying in their work, and with a certain quiet power about them which compelled deep respect. From my experience I should say that the United States, at least the old Eastern States, are very rich in gentlemen of this type. Emerson must have been an ideal man of this sort. But not men to be taken cheap either. On occasion our Professors, usually so gentle, could act firmly enough. I imagine it is the blood of the old Pilgrim Fathers that runs in the veins of these men, which, after generations of cultivation, gives them such singular tenderness, self-reliance and strength. Look at old John Brown—what a perfect gentleman he was, even when lying battered and bleeding at Harper's Ferry, surrounded by an infuriated mob !—or Walt Whitman, walking the hospitals at the South, daily fighting the battle of Love against Death !—men in life, worthy to rank with Colonel Newcome or my Uncle Toby in literature; though different, of course, as all true gentlemen are.

The long vacation had just commenced. I took a room in the college, but had my meals in the town. Through the summer I read a considerable amount. Some of the students were about, which kept me from being too lonely; and, all things considered, I had a good time. One of the students was married, and had a house in the town. I often went with him and his brother to the woods, to fell trees for firewood for the winter. Also one of the students, who had been an actor, gave me lessons in reading and elocution. I went to a Negro camp-meeting, attended service at the Coloured Church, in both camp and Church hearing some most eloquent preaching. As soon as the Unitarian Church re-opened I took a class in the Sunday School; it being usual in America for several of the Churches in a town to close for the summer. On Monday, Sept. 23rd, 1878, the college re-opened; and I settled down in full earnest to the life of a student.

It is not my intention to give any details of my student life at Meadville; but of the effect of it all I must say something; and I find it very difficult to know how to say it. From the day I went to Meadville until now I have been enormously indebted to Unitarians for the free opportunity their institutions have provided for my development, and for the greatest personal kindness and help, rendered in a manner which has made it

doubly acceptable. My respect for individual Unitarians is unbounded. And yet their religious position as a denomination is one which I have always deeply regretted. For want of something, I know not what, all their freedom, all their knowledge, all their generosity, all their high personal character—everything which seems to mark them out as the one denomination to lead the van of religious and social emancipation—never comes to the point of making them a great reforming power. People, with qualities in many respects far inferior to theirs, are moving the world to-day; while they, perplexed and pained as they are, and anxious to find the road by which they may march forward, are scarcely able to maintain the status of their own churches.

It is with unspeakable sorrow that I write this. Again and again have I felt deeply depressed by the Unitarian situation. Long have I waited to see the passionate Reformer arise among them, who would sweep all hindrances away, and call them forth to follow him into the wilderness where the God of Progress always shrouds himself, save to that heroic faith which determines to find him at all hazards. To throw off the trammels of the past is not enough; there must be the prophetic insight into the future. But not even the trammels of the past are quite thrown off. Unitarianism does not mean Free Religion; it means Free Christianity. It is the last word of the Old Gospel, sifted small through the riddle of the Intellect; not the first word of the New Gospel, bursting up irresistibly from the Spirit.

Unitarians are often heard to say that the reason why they do not make more progress is that other Churches are coming to their position. What does this mean but the conception of a God who tired himself out when he made the Unitarian Church, and now cannot go any further? I should have thought that such a statement would have startled such an advanced body into calling upon God for marching orders to take up a more dangerous post, even if they had to leave their tents behind them. But the statement is repeated year after year, and nothing happens. There is one thing needful to Unitarians. God alone knows what it is, but he does not tell them. Is it for want of their asking?

Yet they are so ready, individually, to help those who do go out into the wilderness, as I know well by my own experience, and

as I am sure many another must know also. From the general tenor of their preaching you would suppose that living Faith might now give way to enlightened religious opinion—that enthusiasm and personal abandonment were no longer characteristics of divine fellowship. From their practice you will find that men of no other denomination are so ready to give their money, not only to undenominational purposes, but to work which they admire because of its enthusiasm and yet cannot wholly agree with. Why God has given a Church so many virtues, and yet not chosen it to do the rough work at the front to-day, is to me a very perplexing mystery.

At Meadville I was greatly discouraged by the conservatism of some of the teaching; and still more by hearing constantly repeated the terms of my old Christian faith, but emptied of all their old intensity of meaning. It seemed to me to be simply a question of how many of the old terms could be retained as a proof that Unitarians were still good Christians. The method of Unitarianism appeared to me to be that of explaining away everything in regard to Christianity, and yet retaining the Christian name and the Christian phraseology. The Sydney Free Thought Society compelled me to plead for a constructive programme. Meadville compelled me to plead in defence of destruction, and made me a somewhat intolerant iconoclast.

I have before me the first college sermon which I preached at Meadville. It is a staggerer. At bottom I believe it is all true enough, but—well, I was very young, and very earnest, and very ignorant, and very egotistical. When I think of those three excellent professors sitting opposite me through it all, and saying nothing, not even smiling, I feel a little ridiculous. And I entitled my sermon, ALMIGHTY REALITY! I cannot remember that I was ever reproved for it, save by a kindly remark of Professor Livermore's which I had the good sense to apply rightly. But thenceforth it was made a rule that no sermon should be preached until it had been submitted to the faculty. Had I destroyed that sermon, I should have remembered it as a very fine and courageous performance; and should have regretted deeply that I was unable to quote from it. I have just been looking through it, however; and do not feel the least desire to quote from it.

This incident, coming in the midst of all this brave writing of myself—this sudden check on my complacency, and challenge to

the worth of my whole story—brings back to me a thought which has sometimes struck me as with a blow, and at other times has fallen as a benediction, in the midst of the felt unreality of much within and around me—that a day will come to us, here or hereafter, when we shall see all our past, not merely as our unbiassed better self might be supposed to see it, but as God himself sees it. Especially since I began to write this book has the thought haunted me, that one day my own past will lie all before me, with the clear Eternal Light thrown upon it, and not merely as it lives in my own flattering memory. Unspeakably awful as such an experience might well be—or unspeakably glad as I can also, not without reason, imagine it—my most real moments having also been incomparably my most joyous—it is an experience which I trust is in store for each of us; and I think it must be; for we shall never quite know either God or ourselves until we have passed through it.

Which thought induces a mood very different from that in which much of this has been written—a mood in which one seems to be sinking down and down into the awful depths of Being, as in some waking nightmare; yet not hopelessly either, however fearfully. But, thank God, there is room in our life with him for all our moods; and only in the full freedom of that life is there perfect sanity. Infinite room—no barriers—that is what my conception of Religion is—and always and everywhere the ever changing and eternal glory of the Divine Presence—ever changing to us, and yet ever the same eternal ONE. The obsession of any single idea is not consistent with religious freedom, and shows that we misunderstand God considerably. Owing to the limitations of human nature, and the conditions under which our life-work has to be accomplished, we may be driven to take sides, or even to stand stiffly by one idea which we see is being neglected. In worldly affairs concentration is always needed. But if we take this concentration into our relations with God, we shall become cranks or fanatics. In God is our opportunity for infinite expansion in all directions, and hence the corrective to the limitations that practical life imposes on us. Apart from living with God, I do not see how the fullest and strongest life of both concentration and expansion can be possible. It would mean never to go out of the workshop, never to free the soul from bending over the bench, never to let it

loose among the flowers or the stars. But then, the healthy soul, understanding its relations with these, will be willing to go back to the bench again, and will catch the smile of God in the curl of the falling shavings.

I learnt much at Meadville, especially in the world of Philosophy, under the generous and patient teaching of Professor Cary. But my relations with Philosophy have been very like my relations with Unitarianism. I have been immensely helped by it, and yet cannot accept any of its many systems. From all I have learned something new about life; yet, at bottom, none of them appear to me tenable. This seems to me another illustration of the truth, that the Intellect cannot possibly grasp the whole of life, and unify all its complexities; and, indeed, that no SYSTEM, either of Philosophy or of Religion, can do it. It is a work that remains for the free individual soul to accomplish; and we shall never, I believe, fully realise the ONE in the MANY in our own consciousness, save by each of us living in immediate and original relations with things, getting hints from Systems, but rejecting all of them.

The Philosophy taught at Meadville was of the type of Sir William Hamilton's; indeed, we used Hamilton for our text-book. The effect of its Idealism was to send me over to the Sensationalists. In spite of the ever patient and almost tender arguing of Professor Cary, and the wise prophecy that one day I should grow to see things differently, whatever Religion I had when I left Meadville was still more an emotional survival than ever. Of course I now see the meaning of this reaction. Idealism was presented to me as explaining the Universe, and Sensationalism condemned as not explaining it. I saw clearly enough that the former did not explain everything, and that the latter did certainly explain many things. In later years, after I had learned more of the Sensational Philosophy, I found that it, too, failed most hopelessly to explain everything. Indeed, I have long defined the Universe, as conceived by this School, in the terms of the definition of a hole—NOTHING, WITH SOMETHING ROUND IT.

I repeat—it is not in the power of Philosophy to resolve into harmony this complex Dualism of Life, which causes the quarrels of the Schools. Only the perfectly sane individual can do it; and that, not by his intellect, which would only attempt to frame

some new System, but rather by the sum of his vital energies operating freely among the energies of the Universe, refusing to go maimed in thought or action in any one direction. A life thus lived proves the Universe infinitely vaster than any conceivable System. When Religion is understood to be just such a life, then it will become the one progressive and creative force in man's evolution; and will take its rightful place in the inspiration and unification of man's conceptions and activities. The idea of calling the position of the Agnostic or the Secularist an advanced one! This life of ours, this Universe it inhabits—can it be HOLLOW? But, to this, Dogma has brought us—Religion reactionary, Advanced Thought stultifying. It is not for Philosophy, but for our own emancipated religious life, to save us from this hopeless swing from insanity to insanity again.

The work at Meadville which struck me as most masterly, was Professor Cary's exegesis of the New Testament. It was all so new to me—this cool and natural and honest way of treating the Bible. Step by step, fact by fact, I was placed in a position from which the conclusions followed with fatal precision. Some of the students came to the College prepared to defend orthodox conceptions of Hebrew Literature. Not one of them went away in the same mental condition. The new light, the higher truth, were irresistible. For my own part, it was a great strength to me to find that the Intellect could so completely justify the conclusion to which my own untrained instincts had led me. But it all made me feel more and more the unreality of the Unitarian position, and the absolute need of launching out boldly into Life itself to discover and declare the real foundations of Religion. In this direction Meadville had nothing whatever to offer; nor, I believe, has any Theological College. At best they teach a kind of Apologetics, which comes to this—that, if you do believe in God—you may!

It was at Meadville that I first understood Emerson. I had read him on the Atlantic, and could make nothing of him. In Sydney I read him, and wrote home, that I found him "a hard nut to crack." In Meadville I again attacked him, and wrote home a criticism which showed how small I was.—"I don't think I shall ever get very deeply in love with Emerson. To me his writings do not seem so much the works of a genius, or even of a grand man, as the works of several thoughtful men boiled

[*To face p.* 134.

down into a condensed compound. He is a sort of Extract of Genius." Three months after I wrote, "Though I have read very little of Emerson, what I have read has become part of me." Later I was to go through much the same experience with Walt Whitman. What Emerson did for me was, not to give me a formula, but to stimulate my faith—I do not mean faith of any theological sort, but rather that commanding confidence in the soundness of life which is the first step towards true self-confidence, true courage, and true Religion. I can only have any true self-confidence when I realise my oneness with a Universe that I can confide in. To have this belief in the Universe, and this belief in oneself as part of it, is to have entered the gate of salvation. Only then can a man begin to unfold his life freely and fearlessly in all directions; only then can he begin to enter into that self-possession which is the possession of God also. I must not fill this book with quotations; but if the reader will turn to Emerson's poem, GIVE ALL TO LOVE, he will understand me.

> Heartily know,
> When half-gods go,
> The gods arrive.

More than once have I had to fling down my glove to circumstances with these divine words inspiring me—for my Bible is a very large one.

Another invaluable help I derived from Emerson. He set my already conceived lifetask more clearly before me, so that I could see it in his pages when I was in danger of losing the vision of it in my own soul. Again I must restrain my desire to quote within reasonable limits. I will take the opening paragraph of the Introduction to his series of short essays on NATURE—not the longer single essay on the same subject.

"Our age is retrospective. It builds the sepulchres of the fathers. It writes biographies, histories, and criticism. The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs? Embosomed for a season in nature, whose floods of life stream around and through us, and invite us by the powers they supply to action proportioned

to nature, why should we grope among the dry bones of the past, or put the living generations into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe! The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts. Let us demand our own works, and laws, and worship."

With such an American in our hearts, it is hard to look upon America. Why does God send such men into the world, and allow the world to waste them? "Of whom the world was not worthy"—! We are accustomed to reflect on the wastefulness of Nature—the million seeds scattered profusely abroad, only one of which can realise itself. In another way God appears to be as wasteful with human souls. But—THERE IS EMERSON!

CHAPTER XVII.

MEADVILLE TO WEST CHESTER.

It is evident that I went to Meadville, not as a Unitarian, indeed, but in the hope that a three years' course at the College might turn me out a Unitarian minister. I now see that I was undergoing a process of development which could not possibly have ended in Unitarianism. In my own case Protestant Christianity had been given up absolutely, and I had neither the hope nor the desire to return to it in any form whatever—least of all in the form of this ever diminishing residue, wasting away beneath the free play of the Intellect. With the memories of the intense religious faith I had been compelled to abandon still so painfully clear, a merely residual religion could not have any attraction for me. For my revolt against Christianity has never been an intellectual so much as a spiritual one. It was because my life was fettered by it that I grew out of it. My intellect was but the midwife to the new life within me; and the change in that life was analogous to that sharp transition which marks the change from a dependent life to an increasingly independent one. I began to make my own blood, by breathing the free air, taking my own food, and carrying on my own digestion.

Unitarians, I believe, started the cry, now echoed from many of the Orthodox Churches, that we must return from Christianity to the religion of Jesus. It is an attractive programme, and not expensive. But there cannot possibly be such a return, save in the field of research and speculation; and even there attended with difficulties greater than those met by the intellect. The difficulty of interpreting Jesus is the difficulty of being Jesus, as well as the difficulty of knowing what, in the varied records of him, is really authentic. Certainly all the Christian Churches misinterpret the great Galilean Carpenter in one way or in another;

and I should think the Unitarian as much as any; for it, more than most, seems to miss the revolutionising passion of the Reformer. And in a world where Sorrow, Oppression and Wrong stalk abroad, absence of passion indicates absence of life, however keen the intellect. Among those who really live, passion of some sort must arise, whether with a blessing on its lips, or a curse; for the wild curse, as Jesus cursed, is infinitely more hopeful than a mere mild message of good will, or the method of following the line of least resistance. At best the Churches still linger with Jesus in Galilee. They have not begun to understand the Jesus of Jerusalem.

But our work to-day must be, not to restore the old, but to build the new. A ruin may still be a living thing; a restoration cannot be. It may be sound and weather-tight, and divine service may be decorously conducted beneath its shelter; but the life has departed from it. You cannot bring back the Stone Age by teaching men to make stone implements. You cannot bring back the age of Greece by bringing a ship-load of marbles to England. You cannot bring back the age of Gethsemane and Calvary, of Rome and Jerusalem, by learning all that is to be known about them. "The Age of Ruins is past," says Sidonia the Jew in CONINGSBY. Since Darwin, this may be taught as a scientific verity.

And I would urge this consideration upon all Liberal Christians, especially upon Christian Socialists. The restoration of Athens or of Rome is a dead task. So is the restoration of Jerusalem. You may exhume the body; you cannot exhume the soul which made the body a creative agent. In their own day each of these cities stood for human advancement. Not to be a Greek or a Roman or a follower of Jesus meant, each in its respective period, not to be in the vanguard of the advancing army. To-day we must make our own life great, sacred, divine, as they made theirs; and believe in our own epoch as they did. In London, New York, Berlin, Paris, our opportunity for creation lies; and in them and in ourselves, and in the reaction between them and ourselves, must lie our inspiration also. We have not to convert these cities to the creative thought that made ancient cities or religions glorious. We have to find in each its own creative thought, and abandon our lives to its development. The old irrevocably dies, in order that we, in our

turn, may not be robbed of our share in the everlasting unfolding of the Divine Idea, at the point which it has reached in our own epoch.

Of course I am here expressing thoughts which, at the time of which I write, only operated in my mind as sub-conscious instincts. If I can state them now as conclusions, it is because, during the intervening years, I have worked out their meaning through living by them. Just the manner in which they guided me at Meadville I cannot recall; but I know that, after a year of study, I concluded that I must again go out into the wilderness. It did not seem possible, then, to take a Unitarian Church as a Reformer within the pale, though afterwards I was to attempt it. My mind was too hot in its reaction; so much so that I could not have worked through another year at the college. I feel most painfully guilty of ingratitude as I write this. Meadville did so much for me—how much it is impossible to estimate. I have often looked back on my year there as the strongest in my life—the one in which I was freest from the hindrance of subjective weaknesses, only one other year having equalled it in this respect, the first year of the Labour Church in Manchester, before I had to withdraw into the country. Meadville educated me unspeakably, gave me companions, kept my mind occupied, and left me to think and speak in perfect freedom. I love and honour its three professors—one only still living. The memory of these men makes me feel a fool for all my criticism—yet it must stand —I cannot help but let it. But certainly no other religious denomination could have given me all the help and the free opportunity that the Unitarian then gave, and has since given, unstintingly.

An incident occurred in connection with Easter Sunday which brought to a head my revolt against Unitarianism—an incident which affected me too deeply to go unrecorded. The superintendent of the Sunday School resigned, and I was elected to take his place. I was greatly encouraged by this mark of confidence, the more so that I was only in my first year at the college. I felt, moreover, that an opportunity for good work had come to me worth more than all my studies. Alas, how soon were my hopes to be blighted! Easter Sunday approached. It was usual to have a special musical service for the children in the church in the afternoon. The minister prepared the

programme. I knew his opinions about the resurrection, and was thus astonished exceedingly to find that the words of the service explicitly declared the actual bodily resurrection of Jesus, and that the whole impression of the service on the children would be, that we had met to celebrate that resurrection, and that our belief in immortality rested upon it. I called on the minister, and told him how I felt. He did not pretend to say he believed in the resurrection any more than I did; yet he would not alter the programme. I was staggered. It was a bad experience for me. The sermon on Sunday morning was equally equivocal. With a heavy heart I took my place at the afternoon service as superintendent. It was more than I could bear. On the following Sunday I announced my resignation. I said to some who had tried to dissuade me from this step, "If I could act so dishonestly in regard to my beliefs, I should now be at home in England. Because I cannot, I am a lonely exile."

I find, on reference to my diary, that it was on the Wednesday after this Easter Sunday that I preached my college sermon on ALMIGHTY REALITY, the reading of which just now so humbled me. I had quite forgotten then the circumstances that drove me to be so desperate. My feelings were those of shame, vexation and unspeakable sadness; and I poured them all out in that unhappy sermon. This condition of mind was further intensified by the fact that correspondence with my wife had now ceased. She still held by the old faith; and my letters only served to remind her of the apparently impassable gulf between us, unfitting her thus for living her own life truly. So she rightly judged it her duty to break off our communications. Afterwards she knew that, even at this time, the old faith was already failing her; and I imagine that her decision was one of the effects of this, though she was not conscious of it.

My love and my religion had been so inseparable, that this deeper loneliness had a very withering effect on my faith. This, and Philosophy, and what I felt to be the impossibility of the Unitarian position, all combined to make me increasingly agnostic. Still I worshipped the veiled God. My religion was rather a Theism which had retired into sub-consciousness. A month after the Easter Sunday incident just recorded, it was my turn to lead our weekly conference. I see that I took for my subject, THE MAINTENANCE OF SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE SCHOOL—or College,

as we should call it in England. I have no record or remembrance of what I said, but my choice of subject shows that it was still a spiritual religious life that I lived by and sought to deepen. I never lost my fundamental faith in things, never approached at all near to Pessimism, never failed in my enthusiasm to be a religious Reformer. Throughout the whole time my health remained good, and I maintained a certain buoyancy of spirits in spite of the mental strain I continually endured. But I grew more embittered and destructive, and the deeper love of God was slowly ebbing. In its place I began to put principle and practice, instead of these being, as before, based upon and inspired by it. Truth was the first quality I adored, then Love and Faith cultivated securely thereon. But nowhere around me could I hear that clear ring of Truth which could fill my soul with confidence—only the dying echoes of Truths, that once had been, and were not.

From my farewell letter to my wife there is one passage which I will quote, because it indicates my aims at this period.

"In reading J. S. Mill's AUTOBIOGRAPHY, I came across some lines which expressed exactly my own feelings in deciding to be a minister.—'I am now convinced,' he says, 'that no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible, until a great change takes place in the fundamental principles of their modes of thought. The old opinions in religion, morals and politics are so much discredited in the more intellectual minds as to have lost the greater part of their efficacy for good, while they have still life enough in them to be a powerful obstacle to the growing up of any better opinions on these subjects. When the philosophic minds of the world can no longer believe its religion, or can only believe it with modifications amounting to an essential change of its character, a transitional period commences, of weak convictions, paralysed efforts, and growing laxity of principle, which cannot terminate until a renovation has been effected in the basis of their belief, leading to the evolution of some faith, whether religious or merely human, which they can really believe: and when things are in this state, all thinking or writing which does not tend to such a revolution, is of very little value beyond the moment.'—I may say, however, that my sympathies extend, not so much to the

'philosophic minds,' as to those simpler hearts who want a faith they can believe, and, amidst the wrangle of sects, cannot find. Still, the one thing needful is setting forth this credible faith; and the world must have it. A storm is brewing in the earth, and poor MAN needs some new anchors forged beforehand. To such a work I wish to devote my life—and I think I shall yet have thee to help me."

To a relative I wrote later:—

"You perhaps think of me as still struggling in a sea of doubt, my religion little more than a denial of what I formerly believed. But this is really not so; though, in my loneliness, I do find it hard work to keep near to God and in intimate fellowship with him, and sometimes fear I shall always find it thus. I know it ought not to be; but when nearness to God only makes me feel more painfully, as at present it does, all I miss in my life of love and human fellowship, it is difficult to enter the hallowed circle of pain, and to leave the more easy state of commonplace living. I know, however, that these difficulties are only the earth through which the weak plant must grow and become strong."

Thus I began to descend the dark valley, the bottom of which I was to reach later in England. By going down to the bottom, with set teeth, as it were, and trying to be faithful in the descent which lay before me, I was preparing for the time when I could trust myself while climbing high on the other side. I had to learn the worth of the valley, even, to the soul that seeks above all things to remain faithful. But, for this descent, there was a reason deeper and stronger than any I have here recorded, the effect of which was a slow wearing away of my religious life until it almost died out, save that the cry for it never died out, nor the conviction that, in some way or another, it would come. I wish it were possible to write quite freely of this, because it would enable me to present a study of the method of religious life of the utmost value. But it may not be. In my own heart alone must this experience live, only helping others so far as it has influenced all my thinking and all my doing.

The causes of this experience were wholly external to myself;

none the less they were such as struck at the very root of my up-growing confidence, both in God and in the worth of my own integrity. Slowly but surely they cleared away all the ruin of my former faith that was still left standing, and for long kept me from building up any other in its place. That this final clearance was made is, of course, a matter of supreme satisfaction; yet I wish with all my heart that so inevitable a result had been brought about by other methods. But it has educated me unspeakably, though with an education that I have often writhed under. Against my own will it has individualised me where least I desired to be individualised; succeeding experiences having enforced the same lesson, though not in so severe a fashion—the lesson that God and the soul are one in their relationship, with a oneness into which no other soul may quite enter. I was in danger of not going down to the bottom reality of life, the central unit of it, the impregnable personality of it; and from this my hard discipline saved me. It has made me understand, in a way I cannot explain, that the reality of manhood and womanhood is only attained through real oneness with God. It has cheapened the phenomenal human life very considerably for me, but raised the real, living man and woman to the level of divinity. For a time it injured me, maimed me, took the virtue out of me. In individualising me, it left me very naked and helpless and disheartened. It has ended by teaching me that my lonely self is nothing, that my self in God is indefinitely capable of expansion. It has made me think now of my lonely self and its doings with comparative indifference, and of my self in God with supreme confidence and satisfaction. It has led me to see that evil is not absolute, but only relative; that it is not real, but only phenomenal. More than any other, I believe, this experience has kept open the way of my development, so that I have never stopped growing, and know that I can never stop. The terrible nightmare of my childhood—the looking into a room rapidly expanding without limit, into which my own self had to enter and expand with equal rapidity—was but a physical expression of what I realise now as the fact of my real existence, and realise joyfully, though at times with a joy which is painful in its intensity, our bodies being only occasionally capable of bearing with gladness the emotions which our life with God awakens in them.

All these things I owe to this experience, which fell upon me

at the time like a blinding curse, which I had long to live under and work through, with a heart full of wonder and heaviness. Now, as I write, I see its meaning as I never did before—a meaning that words cannot express to another, but only hint at. And now I am supremely satisfied about it—unspeakably satisfied with the part God had in it; and for the rest—the mystery and the pain and the weakness of the years of my darkness—what does it matter? And she who nobly shared those years of darkness with me, and bore with all my impatiences and failures—will not she also look back on them now in the light of God as I do—but clearer because nearer?

There are other experiences of my life, both glad and sad, which I should like to tell, but may not; and from which I have learned as much, perhaps, as I have from this—learning in the inevitable way in which Life teaches us, the conclusions reaching out far and wide, and harmonising and illuminating whole tracts of human thought and action. These enforced silences about our deepest experiences, and the strongest influences in our development, suggest that each of us must enter into his own relations with God, and that all we can do for each other is to give a few hints from our own discipline as far as we are permitted. But may not these few hints be like the silent taking of the hand of a friend in sorrow, which helps him more than any word we can utter?

One of the students at Meadville was a remarkable man, who influenced me considerably. He was some years older than myself, and was separated from his wife and children because of his loyalty to truth. He was in his third year, and was to graduate at the end of the session. He suffered greatly, and was always in a state of revolt. He formed a branch of Francis Ellingwood Abbott's LIBERAL LEAGUE at Meadville; but, not satisfied to stay there, he drew up a scheme of his own for the formation of RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES, in the furtherance of which scheme I was to help him. His Agnosticism was of much the same type as my own, and doubtless he influenced me in his direction. I remember one starlight night we were walking out together, when, in the midst of a discussion, he pointed to the sky and said:—"God may mean me to reach that star; but, if he does, I shall have to get there myself." It seems to me now much like the answer of the American boy when asked, "Who made

you?"—"God made me so high, and I grew the rest."—An answer truer and more honest than the one expected of him, but yet more smart than truthful, like much else that is still an improvement on the conventional.

Just before the session at Meadville closed, I learned, through a letter in some paper, that there was an opening for one of our Religious Societies in West Chester, Pa. After some correspondence with the writer, I packed up, and went—but by a roundabout way. I knew that nothing could be done publicly until the Autumn, and was anxious for a real change before making a start. I visited the Niagara Falls, spent a day at the Oneida community, then at Oneida in New York State, had five days in Boston, three in Florence where Cosmian Hall and its people were the attraction, descended the Hudson River by steamer from Albany to New York, spent a night in New York, and had a few hours in Philadelphia, reaching West Chester the same evening. At Boston I saw Bunker Hill Monument, met several of the Theological Students at Cambridge, and had two enjoyable interviews with Dr. Felix Adler, the founder of the Ethical Societies in America.

While at Boston I might have seen Emerson, but did not. Some of the Cambridge Theological Students were going to call on him at his home at Concord, and invited me to accompany them, assuring me that I should find a ready welcome. If I remember rightly, they were free to visit him every Thursday. The reason I gave for not accompanying them was, that Emerson was now too old for a stranger to intrude upon. I had heard of his loss of memory; and there was something shocking and vulgar to my mind in a raw youth, hot with new schemes for the regeneration of man, intruding upon the privacy of so august a personage, who had now completed his life work, and over whom the shadow of the hand of Death was peacefully falling. Emerson was more to me, then, than any man, living or dead; and it seemed to me that it would be a vain and weak thing—a sacrilegious act—to go and look at him as one might go and look at any monarch or murderer. So I stayed away, and kept my self-respect. But there is no man with whom I would rather have really conversed than with Emerson. One cannot classify one's handful of Heroes. Each holds a unique place in one's heart, all equally first. Yet I sometimes think that Emerson holds his

rank with me more easily than the rest—till I recall a John Brown, as serene as Emerson himself, though marching all his life to the gallows.

I have mentioned the Oneida Community. I spent a very pleasant day there, and saw, once for all, that there was no economic difficulty in the way of living comfortably on earth. I found a man leisurely weeding a garden path. I asked him how many hours he had to work. He said he did not *have* to work at all—he could do just as he liked. I asked him when he began work, and when he left off. He said, when he wanted to. I felt as though, up to that moment, I had been a fool—the world's fool—and that in future I must live more wisely among real things. I attended their family gathering in the evening, where they discussed all their affairs as a family should. It was very striking—the harmony that reigned there, and the sense of a problem solved. A very remarkable fact, too, that these good people should be driven out of their beautiful estate some years later, because of their morals! At the Oneida railway station I asked a boy how much he charged to black boots. He said, "Five cents." When he had blacked my boots, I handed him five cents. He said, "Five cents each." The community that reared that boy drove out the Oneida Community. None the less I would rather live in this wicked and foolish world. Oneida struck me as stuffy. It struck me, too, as a thing that was done with. When I had built and rigged and sailed my boat, I always wanted to start another. At Oneida the boat was built and rigged and sailed, and seemed about as interesting now as a boat under a glass case.

Moreover, the problem of a Community is not the problem of the world. It is infinitesimal as compared with the world-problem, and in no way tends to solve it. The problem that the Community solves, when it does solve it, is purely personal—how a small number of people, of like ideas and sympathies, with a very narrow range of life, or a very definite purpose in view, can organise their industry and their intercourse to their liking. Their success or their failure in doing this has no bearing on the great Social Question. It is obvious the Communities have not had the least effect on the industrial or social development of America. The reason is, that they get out of that vast current of life in which America has to work and to live; so that, while

they may settle their own affairs very satisfactorily to themselves, they do nothing towards settling the affairs of the nation. But a nation which can tolerate—rather boastfully—a New York or a Chicago, but feels obliged to evict an Oneida Community because of its morals, must be frightfully wanting in humour.

This journey lasted a fortnight, and landed me at West Chester on Wednesday, July 2nd, 1879. West Chester is the chief town of Chester County, Pa. It was very largely inhabited by Friends —both Orthodox and Hicksite. Near it is the celebrated Longwood Meeting, the home of the Progressive Friends. One Sunday I went over to Longwood Meeting, and met the veteran Oliver Johnson and other religious pioneers. It was among the Progressive Friends that I was to find support for our work. For more than two months I read hard, and called on everybody who had about them any suspicion of heterodoxy. It was heavy work, but I kept well and in good spirits, although the thermometer during part of the time registered from 95° to 100° in the shade.

On Friday evening, August 8th, a meeting was held of the few who had any real sympathy with the proposed Society. Eleven were present besides myself. I gave an address on the objects of the new movement, and we were to have another meeting in a week to arrange for preliminary organisation. On the following Wednesday all my plans were cut short by a letter received from my wife. She had completely lost her old faith, and was desperately wretched, and did not know what to do. All the circumstances of the situation pointed to the necessity of my going home. I decided to do so, but with the intention of returning in time to take up the new work in October. On Thursday, August 28th, I landed in Liverpool, my birthplace, having completed the circle of the world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOME AGAIN.

I SHOULD never have known the meaning of patriotism had I not lived in America. The Colonies did not awaken in me any sentiment for the Mother Country. I was under the British flag still. But in America I was under a foreign flag; yet, though I liked the people and the country, and had some most excellent friends, and was everywhere received the more cordially because I was an Englishman, yet I had always a strange sense of having no right to live and work in the country—of being there, indeed, on sufferance only. Deep lay the longing to return to "my OWN, my native, land." I not only believed in England as still the centre of the highest influences in the world; but she was my own country, and I longed to live again in that land in which I could feel I had a right to be and to do.

And I wanted badly to meet the old folk again—the wide circle of relatives and friends—as well as her I loved. I resolved that I would not talk of our religious differences, but would keep simply to those things in which we still alike had some part, and so hoped to bridge the gulf that had opened between us. All the tenderest chords of my heart vibrated at the thought of finding myself once more with those whom I now regarded with more affection and esteem than ever. Alas, the illusion could not last! There was the same kindness and affection—but—! I ought to have known that it would be so. They had not changed. I had changed even more than I had known. And they were so sorely anxious on my account! Even when any reference to my lost faith could be avoided, our silence had more reality than our speech; and when it could not be avoided, the pain was very deep. A relative said to me that she would rather I had returned home guilty of some great crime, than without faith in the blood of Christ.

Truth and Love—the conflict between these is one of the saddest tragedies of life, and few can have experienced its awful meaning more than I have. I have written of Dualism. The Moral Law itself is dual also—Thou shalt tell no lie!—Thou shalt do no unkind deed! In the reality of things, as they are in God, these two may be harmonised. On earth they can never be—will always be the upper and nether millstones between which some of the very tenderest and truest hearts will be crushed. Why? Ask God. There is the fact; and we must shape our lives by facts as best we may. People talk of attaining perfection! They do not understand that there is ever a choice to be made, not only between virtue and vice, but between virtue and virtue.

Only when we have realised this can we understand the vast complexity of life, and how infinitely bigger it is than we are. Only as this strange conflict has sunk deep into our own hearts —with all the suffering it brings, but without any blinding of our eyes—can we realise how small a distance the Intellect carries us, even in the moral life; and how it must serve rather than guide the sum of the life of man. There are plenty of glib expressions to be found in the poets —Truth being followed until at last she turns on us and we find her to be Love too—but it is not so on earth—not always. Truth has compelled me to be cruel again and again to the old folk, wounding them to the very heart, and wounding me too, and her perhaps worst of all who was ere long to be my wife.

Let there be no misunderstanding. Most are so superficial in these things, and repeat some cheap formula in face of the most terrible facts which the formula does not cover. It is not any conflict between our duty to God and our duty to man that I write of. There is no conflict there. Neither is there any conflict between our Love to God and our Duty to God. But the moral law itself comes to us in a dual form—Thou shalt be true!—Thou shalt be kind! Jesus spoke of love to God and love to man. Yet he cursed the Pharisees, and broke his mother's heart, and set man with man at strife. It is to me an awful fact—this sacrifice of Love that Truth demands of us as the condition of the progress of the world.

Before I left England I saw the nature of this conflict, though only dimly then. Truth was my ideal; all had to bend to that.

When charged with being hard, I acknowledged the fact, adding, that Truth was the only rock on which I dare let tenderness grow, and that the time for tenderness would come with riper years and deeper peace. On my return to England, the problem of how to be true to those who loved us, and how to be kind to them also, had to be wrestled with long and sore. I knew that, not merely our future happiness, but the whole worth of our lives to each other and to the world, was at stake. On this I insisted as passionately as ever I had prayed to escape from Hell. I was sure that otherwise my soul would rot, that the still unsolved problem of the religious life would have to remain unsolved for me, that I should have to sink to the level of a mere plotter and schemer in the world.

It was that hard time with us when we had to act, not on our faith, but on our doubts; when our whole future depended upon fidelity to what we did not believe. It was the greatest crisis and the severest struggle in the upbuilding of my religious life. Once, for a short time, I gave way. But the sense of spiritual suicide which weighed upon me compelled me to return to my allegiance to Truth, and then the crisis was past.

There are no Rules, I have often said. Our fate demanded this path. The fate of others might make the more comfortable and conformable path right. It is not for me to judge. I am quite sure, however, that, for us, the hard and cruel and true path was right; and I must have sacrificed all I hoped for in love and home rather than have followed any other. But this sacrifice was not demanded. Truth won, and Love for those whom we hurt became thenceforth a pain and a mystery to us. There are those who regard the days of all intense things as past—miracles, crucifixions, burnings, and the like. Not yet. Life is still volcanic enough. And Conformity still escapes, walking blindfolded along her straggling way.

Although this battle for Truth was won, I still feel the wounds of the long fight. But I am sure I bear something more real in me too. It has given me a clearer insight into the reality of things. The fact that I have been compelled, for my soul's needs, to live upon a principle that only eternity can justify—of what tremendous import is that! The fact that, when, for Love, I wavered in my allegiance to Truth, my soul began to rot within me, till I seemed to begin to stink, and that yet my soul's life

demanded the pain of other hearts, and that I dared not, could not, sacrifice my soul to save their pain—of what tremendous import is that! But it means nothing to another, save by way of suggestion and hint. It cannot be put down in a book, and worked up into a rule. Only the same experience in another, bought at the same terrible cost, can produce any real and abiding growth.

In following out this experience I have run ahead of my story. The first effect of my return home was, not unnaturally, to quicken my former faith in God. Circumstances made it necessary that I should remain in England, and my own will readily gave assent. So I had to write letters of explanation to my friends at West Chester, and to get my things sent home. After due enquiries, I found that there would be no difficulty placed in the way of my obtaining a Unitarian pulpit, if I could find a congregation that would have me; though of course I was told that my non-Christian position would create a difficulty. I should, for instance, have to find a Church where they had neither a communion service nor infant baptism. Meanwhile I was able to attend lectures at Manchester New College, then in London; now Manchester College of Oxford. Thus again the freedom of and generosity of Unitarianism were manifested.

In one of my letters, written from London at the end of 1879, I find a clear statement given of my position in response to a question on the subject.

"I believe in God, and I trust him in everything. I believe that he is working for the best, and that he expects me to co-operate intelligently with his workings, and to live in accordance with his laws. I don't know much about God—just enough to feel sure I may trust him, and that is all. The child knows very little of its father, but its confidence in him is perfect. I do not make happiness the aim of life, but holiness, believing that I am thus living in accordance with God's laws, and leaving the results of my life in assurance that all will be well.

"I believe in prayer; not in the sense of causing God to come to my help when otherwise he would not do it, but in the sense of communing with the Father of my Spirit, by which communion I bring myself into relationship with him, and lift myself up by contact with his holiness and greatness. Prayer with me is

rather an aspiration of my soul towards God than a begging for things I have not got. If God is working out his will in all things, how can I ask him to alter his conduct in any respect? And if life brings me any new duty, I cannot expect that God will do it for me. But I can alter my relationship to him by seeking fellowship with him, and I can make my duty less burdensome by so doing. Prayer is a fulfilment of the conditions of spiritual growth, and gives to our souls what sunlight gives to the flowers.

"I believe in the immortality of the soul. What our life in a future state will be, I cannot tell; but surely we may suppose it will be one of continuous progress towards the great Source of all things.

"My chief aim, however, will be, not to preach belief, but action. The man who is doing his duty has the highest revelation of God he can have. The great remedy for doubt is action."—I did not, of course, mean by this, what so many Christians mean when they use this formula—the continuance of action along the lines of the doctrine doubted.—"Membership in a Church should not be held open to those who believe the most, but to those who are willing to do the most. I should want a Church of workers; and if a man came along and said, 'I don't believe much, but want to help to raise the fallen and feed the hungry,' he should be welcome."

It was in this faith that I preached in a good many Unitarian pulpits between November 1879 and May 1880. Everywhere I went I found those who were ready for a freer and more advanced position than that of Unitarian Christianity, and also I found a great deal of pure Agnosticism. But the Churches seemed all more or less dependent upon a few wealthy subscribers, or at any rate upon what I may call orthodox Unitarians. As in America, so in England, I felt that the Unitarian body was a survival from the past instead of being the advance guard of the future. Still there were so many who seemed anxious for a real advance, that it seemed to me that this fact, together with the freedom offered, gave me the opportunity I needed.

One of the poorer London Churches invited me to be their minister. I should have accepted the invitation, but there was the difficulty of the sacraments—Christening and the Lord's

Supper. Upon my stating these as hindrances, I was told that I might exchange pulpits whenever these sacraments had to be administered; but I could not feel satisfied with such an arrangement. Moreover, I was myself beginning to feel that I still had not a sufficiently sure foundation for my own faith to be able to work and preach successfully under the depressing conditions which Unitarianism as a whole offered. The real reason, however, for this want of faith lay in the gradual working out of the causes named in the previous chapter. My spiritual life was gradually breaking down beneath burdens greater than it could bear. I saw that it must be built up far more strongly yet before I could become a preacher.

There was no choice for it, then, but to return to Architecture. It was a bitter experience; yet I can quite believe it was for the best. Like a former experience in Norwich, it showed me that there were limits to my powers of burden-bearing; and that, with the most devoted will to work, there were conditions under which I could not go forward. It means, of course, that what we can do depends absolutely on what we are; and that what we are is not entirely a matter of our own responsibility. But there is something humiliating, sometimes crushing, in being forced to recognise one's limitations. In my own experience I have often had reason to suppose that God thinks much more of our education than he does of our achievements.

I still have the notes of the sermons I preached in England at this time. What appears from them is, that my beliefs were matters of faith alone; that I had not then had sufficient experience to rise higher than this. Indeed, I was drifting into the position so cleverly described by Browning in BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY.

> All we have gained then by our unbelief,
> Is a life of doubt diversified by faith,
> For one of faith diversified by doubt;
> We called the chess-board white,—we call it black.

From the notes of the last sermon of this period, preached at Canterbury, I will give a few extracts.

MAN'S PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE.

"The growing knowledge of the age appals us. It comes on us like a flood, and well-nigh wrecks our little crafts. We must

keep our heads bravely to the sea, or we shall be surely swamped. The Psalmist, with his little knowledge of the Universe, cried, with deep emotion, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?' With feelings almost too deep, we utter the same words to-day. Our knowledge of our position in the Universe weighs upon us too heavily if we realise it at all adequately. Man seems such a mere dash of spray on the infinite ocean of life, that faith in his glorious destiny well nigh fails. . . .

"We must be willing to accept the facts of life as they come to us. Science is teaching us with a vengeance how foolish our former self-regard was. Are we willing to learn our lesson? It is far nobler to do so. Are we ready to take the higher course that opens before us, and to develop a yet higher virtue than the world has seen; or must we still, like little children, demand to be kissed and petted and caressed before we will do our task? Here lies the point. Life is demanding of man a higher virtue. Will man respond, and still go forward? Religion in the past has had too much self-regard. Will a Religion in which self-regard has little place gain man's homage in the future? The Religion of the past has directed man's longing eyes to heaven. The Religion of the future will make large demands on his eyes for use on earth. It will no longer point him to choirs of cherubim and seraphim and redeemed saints praising God to all eternity; neither will it point him to an alternative of endless burning in Hell. It will say, sternly, yet kindly, 'Do your duty here, and leave the rest with God. On all sides you are surrounded by lives in which you can lose yourself, and which you can brighten by acts of sympathy and love. Attend to these; regard their needs, their joys, their sorrows. For the rest, trust that the Great Spirit whose laws you seek to obey will take care of your own little life; but, even if faith fail, you must yet go on.' . . .

"And now I ask you, friends, if a man is thus willing to grow great before his doubts and fears, can there be any reason to believe that he will, in the end, lose faith in God, and feel himself to be such a momentary bubble on the surface of the infinite sea of being? I am assured we need have no fear. But all man's hope for the future depends just on this—that, in proportion to

the increase of his knowledge, so shall his moral strength increase. We see the starry heavens without set over against the moral law within. If man lets the moral law fail to be accomplished in him, the starry heavens will utterly overwhelm his soul with their magnificence. Instead of shining lovingly upon him, they will burn despair into his heart. . . .

"Man *must* face the infinity about him. He *must* realise, far more than he has yet done, what a bubble on life's current his mere earthly career is. And if he would stand unappalled before the starry sky, that shall hold long, long watch over his narrow grave, he must do so from a sense of the infinity of the moral law within, and must obey that in all that it may call on him to do."

It is needless to dwell on the imperfect grasp of the religious life which all these sermons reveal. At least they show the beginnings of faith, and the conditions out of which the higher knowledge must grow. Although I think I have now reached far beyond where I then was, I am more conscious than ever of the boundlessness of our life with God and of the little we can learn of it here. Yet, as in Science, so in Religion, it is permitted to us to know that we have set our feet upon the rock, and have attained to something real. But my growth to this was not to be from the point I had then reached. I had to go back, to sink deeper into doubt, to look on life, and on my own life, sometimes almost with despair.

Happily I thoroughly liked my old profession, as far as it went; and had been fairly well grounded in it. Once having made up my mind to go back, I found the way easier than I had expected. For some time I acted as clerk of the works on a building in London, which added greatly to my practical knowledge. Then I took a practice at Folkestone, and some time after opened a second office at Dover. For more than three years I worked hard at my calling. In the early days, when work was sometimes slack, I did some writing to keep my ideal from dying out; but for the greater part of the time I was far too busy to give my hobby a ride. Often I had to work far into the night, and sometimes all night; and I entered heartily into all that I did. Still, my real life lay languishing outside, finding no freedom to grow.

CHAPTER XIX.

LETTERS FROM FOLKESTONE.

On December 1st, 1880, I commenced practice as an Architect in Folkestone; and was married on July 28th, 1881, at a registry office in London. From memory alone it would be impossible to give any account of my condition at this time, save a very vague and inaccurate one. The fact of having had to go back to Architecture sometimes filled me with a sense that my life had been degraded, that all the virtue had gone out of me. My circumstances were such as drove me to extreme statements; as this, for instance:—"Experience teaches me that I am far better outside a Church. Even for my own life it is better I should stay away; and as a question of external conduct it is more consistent. Why should my character raise the credit of a Church, when it might raise the credit of Atheism? My influence cannot be much. Why, then, should I put it in the wrong scale?"

I think the extracts which follow will show that I was far enough from Atheism of any sort; that, through all the trials of that time, my faith in God was really striking deeper root—going down to those bare foundations in myself on which the truest religious life must always rest. I began to grapple with weaknesses and difficulties in the strength of my own will, inspired by my own ideals, and supported by that strange power, not my own, of which I became so deeply aware in San Francisco.

"Folkestone, *November 24th*, 1880.

"My heart is very full to-night: I had been dreaming away in a busy whirl, and am suddenly awakened to feel something of the depth that lies beneath the current of our lives; the unknown depth which we cannot fathom. Would that I could talk to thee. . . . And yet I know not what I should say, for all is so

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vague and shadowy. That which is most real most eludes our grasp. . . .

"I said, I felt compelled to ask myself as to my life—what it was, and whether all it ought to be. Well, I am trying to be true and pure and honest, to walk in a straight line, to be simple and loving. Yet I am never what I wish to be. The straight line becomes a zigzag, simplicity becomes complication, kindness becomes self-interest. . . . Sometimes I try to make myself satisfied with my life. I say that I am living the life that is natural to me; and that the whole duty of man is to do that, and rest contented. But I am not contented. I want to be more a man, to live more above circumstances than it seems possible for me to do now.

"Most of life seems so superficial. This Architecture, for instance—what is it? Our fathers built one way; we build another; those who follow will build another. And yet, if we go deeper than the surface, we reach the unfathomable, the impenetrable. We return, and try to delight our hearts with the surface; but something awakens us once more, and we grow restless and anxious again.

"My heart sleeps long sleeps, but it is not dead. It needs sleep. It could not live long if it were as often awake as it used to be. Would that the possibilities of life were otherwise!"

"FOLKESTONE, *February 7th*, 1881.

"Carlyle is dead—simply worn out. Such men do not surprise me. I only wonder that they are so rare. Why should he be the greatest literary figure in this age, and Gladstone the greatest statesman? Better are conceivable, and will yet come. I do not undervalue these; I reverence them. But my ideal of Humanity is far ahead of facts.

"What strikes me about Carlyle is that character is everything in him. He is above all things a man. So with Emerson. Such men make me value beliefs at almost *nil*. Why should we worry about trying to believe something? Let us be something, and allow that to suffice.

"Yet one's actions and endeavours must lead to beliefs. But what I want is that these should be spontaneous; and that we should not base our life on them, but them on our life. Regarding action, I should say, 'Be in earnest! Work!' Regarding beliefs

I should say, 'Drift!' Let your life of action lead you whither it will into the land of speculation, and live a man apart from your speculations. I am sure this is a higher ideal than such as—'I can't be good if I don't believe in God'; or, 'If the Bible be not inspired, what matters it how I act?'

"The question of Immortality does not trouble me. I have no interest in it, even, just now. Carlyle's death awakens no thoughts of the future. I ask myself, 'How can I live to emulate Carlyle in his goodness and greatness?' I always contend that, if I am immortal, I best fit myself for Immortality thus, and not by worrying about it.

"So, with regard to a personal Father—I do not deny the existence of such. I have studied the question very earnestly, and conclude that it is not worth troubling about. Character, life—these interest me. And so does the Power about me, and the beauty and the joy, and the ugliness and the misery. But I can form no conclusions in these regions, and have little interest left in forming any. I leave these to appeal to me. I do not appeal to them. . . .

"To me these questions are supremely attractive. Architecture is nothing—mere play to pass away time, make a living, get a hold on practical every-day life, and build a platform to work from.

"The first aim in our married life must be to learn. We must read all we can together. We have something more to live for than our immediate relationship. We are part of one human family, and must live as such. . . .

"Our inspiration will come from within and from without. Our fellows will inspire us, and so will this great sea. In all lives, whatever the beliefs, there are times when inspiration fails, and so will there be in ours. We must help each other to bear such seasons, and work on in hope, knowing they are necessary and temporary. Day implies night, and has its glory enhanced by the contrast.

"I am going to try to get some reading done this evening, as long as I can keep awake. I have brought Emerson from Norwich to read occasionally as a Bible. No striving after belief there!

"Is it not terribly sad about Ireland? I am inclined towards Home Rule, and even entire severance if necessary. If I were Parnell, I think I would act much as he has done; certainly I should agitate and obstruct. Whatever may be said against them,

their course has succeeded admirably, and was the only one to succeed. What could make our selfish country care two pins about Ireland, but the worrying she has had of late?"

"FOLKESTONE, *March 5th*, 1881.

"I enclose Street's lecture."—The late George Edmund Street, P.R.I.B.A.—"It has made me feel again that I shall never be an Architect worthy of the name, and that I must do something more than that if I am to make the most of my life. I am quite content to go on as I am now for some time, but must look forward to better work some day to put alongside of this. I send the lecture that you may understand something of the feelings which led me before to give up Architecture. I cannot put my whole soul into it as I ought, because I cannot see the supreme good of doing so. I must limit my energy to something, but cannot be content to put the limit there. I can only remain in the profession as a stepping-stone to something better."

"FOLKESTONE, *April 30th*, 1881.

"What I have feared most has been that I should lose my virtue—manly energy—as Samson is supposed to have lost his when he lost his hair. While I can be myself, maintain my integrity, hold myself under control, and be independent and free, so long do I feel that life is worth living. But when I begin to compromise myself to please others, then I lose all purpose in life, all hope, all inspiration, all joy. Nature has no voice for me, art does not please, life is clouded by a funeral pall."

"FOLKESTONE, *May 31st*, 1881.

"I send SESAME AND LILIES for you to read the Lecture on LILIES. Such food as this did I find most congenial to me as I was growing up into life, and on such food was my manhood nurtured. So deeply did I drink in the high ideals presented to me, that at last I dared not read some books lest they should overpower my own individualism and character. I weaned myself, and became more manly; but I doubt not that if I read that lecture again, the old hopes and passions and yearnings would be aroused as before, and I should feel that life was mean, indeed, compared with what it ought to be.

"Thou wilt learn, there, on what my ideal of womanhood

was built. My ideal is not lower now, I know; and though it may, perhaps, be altered, it is now yet more exalted. One thing thou wilt find there, one ideal to which my heart clings, that woman should be the angel power in a man's life, the inspiration of his actions, the overpowering good. Talent, even genius, a man may have; and yet never be a whole man unless some woman's soul inspire his genius. I know not what my talents may be; but, whatever they are, they will be of little service to mankind unless thou become the very soul of them. . . .

"I know you have sometimes thought my ideal of manhood and womanhood too high. But remember this:—No man has the power to lower his ideals. The highest beauty, the loftiest grandeur, we have seen, become for us thenceforth standards of all beauty and grandeur. Those solemn and glorious sunset skies on the tropical Pacific have for ever paled the beauty of any I may witness here.

"And so no man has any power to satisfy his soul with a lower life than he has once lived. I know that, with all its rough faults, my life at Meadville was a true and manly one; and I sadly know that since then it has been for the most part an unmanly one. Yet, no; I will not say quite that; for the battle I have had to fight has been too terrible for me to admit that. Yet I have been at times unmanly and altogether unmanned through the conflict of my ideal with that which I have been asked to accept. Nevertheless, I have no power to lower my ideal; I have no power to change it, even, unless it be by merging it into one larger and more perfect. For I do not regard my ideal as final. I want to expand it, and make it more universal and comprehensive. To marriage have I ever looked forward as the one means to this end."

"FOLKESTONE, *July 4th*, 1881.

"That strange power in me, which always will have its way, warned me that I had stepped out on the wrong path. . . . Now I am compelled to do what then I might have done from choice. I question whether you quite understand this inner power in my life. It was when I was in San Francisco that I first realised its presence. If I do not let it have its own way, it will kill me. At Meadville it had its own way, and I was free, and comparatively happy. . . . Ever since then I have had so much to fight against

in one form or another, that I have never regained quite that old freedom, never had quite the same control over my life. But I mean to get back my old power and inspiration somehow, and I mean to begin to-night."

". . . It is in such things as these that my faith manifests itself. I can trust life after all. I know there is a mighty power at work on which I can rely. It is that power which, when I would take a false path, steps in and says, No! It is that power which has hitherto driven me on through life, and which demands of me just one thing—that I shall be honest. As I look into the future now, I have absolutely no fear. I did not want to be quite the man I must be, but I have no choice. I acquiesce, and will be happy and strong over it, knowing that after all I am not alone, not self-dependent, but that beyond and above me and all around me there is a power which sways me beyond my own choosing."

"FOLKESTONE, *July 20th*, 1881.

"Having gained so much, we must together make fresh demands on life; and may we not hope to be able to say at last, in a far higher sense than that in which ——— used the words, "We have had everything we wanted?" But I am in no hurry. I have always been ready to wait; and will do so still, if need be. I only wish to be ready and waiting for the right moment, so that I may use it when it comes. All the past arranges itself in review as one grand series of lessons to school us for the real life which awaits us. Nothing will be wasted. Here is the grand remedy for all regrets—the perception that all can be used. But we can only have this perception while we are on the highest path we know. . . .

"Here I am reading a book which will always be remembered by me as marking a great step forward into life. DAVID ELGINBROD was the first of the series, and I am so glad that I am still such that yet another can be added to the list. I have sometimes regretted being so impressionable, and yet I know I ought to value it very highly, while I can control it, and make it take me ever higher to the topmost ideal of which I am capable. It is this quality which keeps men ever young, and the world ever fresh to them. It is the tender touch of childlikeness, which makes old age in a few cases so rich and ripe.

"And yet what awful battles, what sad defeats, this impres-

sionability of mine has caused. Thou knowest all, however—how evil shades off and blends into good; how nearly allied are the passion which blesses and makes noble, and the passion which makes wretched and degrades. I trust I shall never forget how near the blaze of destruction this hot soul of mine once was, and from what a hard struggle thy love is saving me."

This last sentence refers to the early days of my life in lodgings in Norwich. In addition to what I have already said on the subject, and in further illustration of it, I may say here that, during my long absence from England, my love and reverence for the woman who was now to be my wife still kept me free from the temptations which had once made me so desperately miserable. My love was a religious cult, and it so absorbed me that I was shielded from all harm. While I strongly deprecate asceticism, and know that the more completely and naturally we employ all our faculties the more we shall understand God, yet I am quite sure that, in circumstances demanding it, we may be raised completely above our sensual nature by a strong spiritual communion and love. This is a living fact; but the moment we make a doctrine of it for the direction of the individual or of society, we kill the life of it, and forge it into a cruel fetter. Centuries ago we were taught to hold the truth in love. We have yet to understand that we must hold the truth in freedom also.

To a friend I wrote during this same period:—

"Since first doubting the truth of Christian doctrine, I have always held this to be the only possible basis of my life—to act out whatever convictions I may have, and to be as faithful to my doubts as to my beliefs. I have said that whoever renounced a dogmatic belief must make utter shipwreck of life, unless he was faithful and true to his inmost thought. And I have found that if I abandon this principle of Integrity, for the sake of saving others from pain, I abandon all that makes life worth living; all, indeed, that makes life possible.

"To me Atheism consists in making mere happiness one's aim in life, in acknowledging no obligation to live in obedience to law. I wish to acknowledge a Higher Power in all I do; I cannot live an Atheistic, lawless life; I must have confidence that my efforts after integrity will lead to the greatest blessing

for all of us, even though their immediate effect be sorrow and pain. I must believe that there is a Power to overrule all honest action to the best ends; and find it impossible to believe that there is any need for me, by a lie, to endeavour to relieve the least or the greatest sorrow. . . .

"I can only fall back on the assurance that no evil can come from what I do uprightly, and in acknowledgment of the high laws by which we live. I dare not take the control of my life into my own hands; I must abandon myself to that Law in my nature which tells of a Power other than my own. It is not as an act of self assertion that I make this stand, but as an act of obedience and faith. . . .

"With all my heart, I say, 'Surely to be true is the best acknowledgment of God. There is service, there is worship, there is sacredness and holiness and consecration.' . . .

"I have asked myself whether I am right in saying, 'Integrity first, Altruism afterwards.'"—By Altruism I here meant simply pleasing others, as opposed to being true to them.—"I have tried to work out the other creed, 'Altruism first, Integrity afterwards.' But I find this latter too godless for me, even, who am supposed to have no God. I dare not go so far on the road to Atheism as that. I dare not, by any action of mine, deny the Moral Power of the Universe. I wish to tread a path towards a higher faith than the one I now possess, to a stronger hold on the Infinite. I regard this deification of OPINION as too mean a creed to confess; and if ever I offer to bow my knee to such a God, never trust me thenceforth. . . .

"The world's golden opinions cannot be bought so. He who wins golden opinions is he who least lives to win them. The world will not think well of us for trying to please it. It will not thank us for our obsequiousness. What it really feels at heart is—'Regard not our own opinions; flout them as you will; they are only the expression of our *ennui*, of our longing for something holy and true. Go on your own path. At first we will decry you; but go on. If you dare brave us, you will win our homage; and we, who began with deriding you, will at last reverence you.' . . .

"Most people wish to be honest, but few really know what honesty is. To most it is endeavouring to *seem* what they are. To me it means endeavouring to *be* what we are. We may rest

assured that the latter ideal achieves both ends, while the former achieves neither. If we endeavour to act strictly in accordance with what we are, the world will come to understand us without our going out of our way to please it. If we are always seeking to explain ourselves, we shall always be misunderstood, if not despised.

"Character must come before all else. The man who intensely *is* will be revered and trusted; and if he be a whole man, full of sympathy, he will be loved. He is the man to whom the sinner will appeal for help, the sorrowful for comfort, the weak for strength, the perplexed for guidance. He will continually be healing the sick, the lame, the blind; for virtue is in him, and must go forth from him. . . .

"Perhaps the path I have followed may seem too selfish, too egotistic. It may be that you have thought that, for the sake of others, we ought to sacrifice something of character, even, rather than maintain our character at their expense. This is the view I have tried hard to take, but have failed. If we take Pleasing for our guide, and break our spirits for the sake of friends who love us, we render our lives useless for the rest of Humanity. Also, I cannot see that, in the highest sense, we are faithful to our friends in compromising ourselves for their sake. A higher sense of responsibility to them, even, would, I am sure, demand a higher integrity."

CHAPTER XX.

MARRIAGE AND LONELINESS.

It was only when I was married that I knew what ease and repose meant. All through my life the genial sunshine of existence had been denied me. I had lived through almost every experience but that of home-happiness, and the settled peace and freedom it brings. Any expansion of the mind or of the affections brought only a reaction of pain; all my development was attended with difficulty, and sometimes with despair. I was like a mushroom growing beneath a flag-stone. The mushroom did lift the stone, but it was badly flattened out. What made it worse for me was, that it was my nature to expand rapidly, because I saw and felt keenly; and yet I was too sensitive in mind and body to make of these oppositions to growth a source of inward strength. Indeed, there has always been in my life a want of proportion between impulse and power; and I have sometimes thought that a free and happy childhood would have remedied this evil. On the other hand, it might have weakened my impulses, and reduced me to the level of a common-place respectable man—just the type of man I find it now so easy both to respect and dislike—the man who is always reasonable, and who is never moved to attempt anything beyond the limitations of his strength and his circumstances —the man who, in the mass, is the frightful dead weight that every Reformer has to lift, or himself be crushed.

At Meadville I remember being forcibly struck with the hopelessness of the married students for reform. There was a good deal of static force about them; no dynamic. It helped to reconcile me with my hard and lonely lot. They always talked of Peace, and Love, and the recognition of Facts, and the growth of the Spiritual Life. While I was burning for

some hot Crusade against the Conformity, the Conventionality, the Compromise which were paralysing Unitarian work, these married students saw nothing wanting but the cultivation of all the graces in a hot-house. It worried me—though I liked the men themselves greatly, in spite of their calm and smiling superiority.

Of course the married life is itself a kind of hot-house wherein the tenderer graces grow very comfortably; and of course it was just what I needed to reduce to sanity my already too rampant nature. The danger of marriage to me lay in its tendency to make me unduly sane; to give me a sanity which was incapable of movement or direction. From this, I believe, the effect of loneliness after marriage has saved me. Before I was married, I cannot remember that solitude had ever the paralysing effect on me that it has since had. Whatever I had to suffer, I never found myself unable to work; indeed, work was always my great stimulus in solitude. Even after my return to Architecture, and up to the time of my marriage, I never found my difficulties or my sense of loneliness interfere with my working capacity. Since marriage, however congenial my work, the absence of my wife from home has always produced the same paralysis, which no conditions could do more than palliate. On the first day of her absence I would get along fairly well; by the end of the second day the disease would have a good hold on me; and thenceforward the paralysis might fluctuate, but would never leave me. On my wife's return, if only after a week's absence, I had to recover as if from an illness.

I have spoken of this effect as a kind of paralysis; but this is a very incomplete description of it. The cause of the paralysis has been the sudden outbreaking of all the old impulses and impatiences with such force as to quite unfit me for immediate duties. I believe that it has been during these periods of loneliness since marriage that all my forward movements have had their birth. An overwhelming discontent has seized me. All existing facts have seemed almost contemptible. Old ideals and new ideals have rushed upon me as in a kind of nightmare. All the past has seemed meaningless, all the future has looked hopeless, save so far as I have then determined that these ideals must and should be realised. Desperate times these of loneliness have often been to me—times in which my feelings have become so

intense that my whole nature—mental, moral, spiritual—has been as if overthrown by them; and yet times of new birth and new insight, wherein new ventures have been initiated.

But I could never realise anything in loneliness. For action upon the impulses of these volcanic periods, the return of the home love has always been necessary. After these returns, the life-work has been taken up afresh, with new strength and new insight and higher purpose. So have I stumbled forward, my hours of vision having been mostly hours of bitterness, even of a sense of degradation, sometimes of despair. But I have been saved by them from the arrest of development, the acceptance of accomplished facts, which marriage is too apt to bring.

I will now give some extracts from letters written during my first period of solitude after marriage.

"FOLKESTONE, *November 20th*, 1881.

"This has been a very lonely day, and one which I shall be glad to see the end of. Last evening I began to get very lonesome, and grew rather unhappy at the little work I had to do. So, after a cup of tea at 9 o'clock, I set my brain to develop some schemes whereby I might bring work if it would not come. The result was that I did not get to bed until twelve, and did not go to sleep till after one. My schemes were as follows. . . . All these kept whirling about in my brain, kaleidoscope-fashion, till I seemed no longer master of my own thoughts. . . .

"I get very sick of all this scheming to get on. How I wish I could throw all my energies into one settled purpose as I did when I thought to preach. But that cannot be. I must do the best I can under far more difficult circumstances. . . . Any way, though I cannot preach, I don't mean to fold my hands and do nothing."

"FOLKESTONE, *November 27th*, 1881.

"I have just finished WESTWARD HO! It has made me think deeply; and, as always when deeply stirred, I knelt down to think out what might come. And there came, naturally enough, as so often before, a longing to get out of all this self-seeking, and to get at some work which would absorb me in thoughts for others, some work which would more beautifully sanctify the sacredness of our love, and make us continually feel that life

was a brave and holy thing. Others, in their longing for this, go to church. I must go to work.

"I do not rebel at the self-seeking. It is part of the true life; and, therefore, I doubt not, may be made a true and noble part. And I would not wish to undertake any work which would prevent me from making thee a comfortable, though always a simple, home.

"And then I thought of my want of definite faith in God, and of the deep and powerful faith which still lives in me, and which the strange experiences and trials of my life have made it impossible for me to lose. And I longed to be able to tell my tale to the world, and to feel free from all the burden of the past, and better prepared for the work of the future.

"I need inspiration, which means to me inspiring work. I have had it, and must have it again. I am not impatient. It will come; and I think I shall be ready when the first possibility of it appears. It may come now, or it may be years off; but, whenever it may be, I shall have thee to help me to realise my hopeful dreams."

In the following year came another time of loneliness, when our little boy was about two and a half months old.

"FOLKESTONE, *August 28th*, 1882.

"I don't seem as though I could do any good at anything, or care about anything, when you are away. I am very disgusted with myself; but I simply can't help being lonely and restless and moody and indifferent, and so I must tell you of it. I often think whether I cannot avoid it, but I can see no help. Life is not worth living when you are out of the house. After tea I read Wordsworth's HAPPY WARRIOR, and thought what a weak thing I was."

"FOLKESTONE, *August 29th*, 1882.

"I am hoping that my lonely time may produce good fruit in the lessons it will teach me. I have been feeling that my life is wanting in the moral element, that there is no real earnestness and self-sacrifice in it, no devotion to anything which will ennoble my existence; and I have thought of this deficiency as a wrong to thee as well as to the world and myself. . . .

"I do not write this with any deeply repentant feelings. My life had been one of bitter and almost hopeless struggles. For a year I have had a life of ease. My life had been one of almost impossible aspirations. For more than a year it has had for its chief aim to get on. No wonder, then, that I should feel at the end of the year that the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. The half fanatic I once was and the half worldling I now am must unite, and for the future years of our union make for thee and ours a full-hearted man.

"I used to have an intense realisation of the high law which binds our lives. Happiness and scepticism have united to hide from me the constant perception of that ruling power. I have become too self-sufficient, too self-complaisant. I must call back the old sense, the high instinct. The voice of Nature does not sound in my ears, because I account myself my own master rather than her child. My love for thee tends to degenerate with use, because I have forgotten to recognise that we are bound by a power beyond the choice of our own will; although, on the other hand, all that has happened since our marriage has made our union increasingly sacred to me. . . .

"I need a fresh consecration to Duty, like that which drove me to hold thee at arm's length until the path of Duty should lead us together. I never did believe that Truth and Duty would separate us, and I have infinitely less reason to think so now. Our love is boundless. It overrides all circumstances and conditions. It ever grows more real. But I need to return to the old feeling that we must hold our love for each other in the second place, our love for Law and Truth in the first. We must not feel that we are taking our joy, but that it comes to us.

"I begin to hope that, after all, I may learn the Way of Life. I still long to be a teacher, but have hitherto felt that I had not learnt any lesson myself, that all my experiences had left me without any principle of life at all. But now I have more hope in the future. . . .

"I am as one waking from a dream; one who, happy as his dream has been, finds his waking thoughts more beautiful. I am not enthusiastic or impatient. I look for growth and development, for labour and battle, for sunshine and rest. . . .

"Whatever may happen in the future, I shall have had one clear vision 'of life, such as I feared I should never enjoy. For

once, just once, my head has got above the clouds of common life, not to enter a perfectly clear almosphere, perhaps, but at least to reach the sunnier clouds beyond. For once, just once, I know what it is to be so enriched in thought and spirit, that I regard the blessing as a treasure stored for use during the whole of my future life. I am happy, not so much in what I have, as in what I am to enjoy. An annuity from heaven has been settled on me, not enough to retire upon, but sufficient to relieve me from much anxiety as to the future.

"I thought I had done with epochs, with spiritual spring-tides, with revelations from which a man can never fall back. Yet here I am, settled in business, settled in my work, a wife, a child, to call my own, and now the best moment of all has come, a moment to be remembered beyond every other so far. Other lessons have come from books, from external aids. This is a gift from Life, the natural product of existence.

"It is not so much that I have found something. It is grander than that. I see clearly that there is something to find. Where I saw only the dull grey mist, I now see a glorious landscape. I will travel towards the beautiful land. Though the mists may again envelop it, I have had a vision of its glory. There is that which is worth living for, suffering for. There is a goal towards which our feet may tread."

"FOLKESTONE, *September 3rd*, 1882.

"I feel to have taken quite a fresh step in life, to have come from the ranks of the negatives to those of the affirmatives. The difference is great. In the latter are life and growth, flower and fruit. . . .

"I was thinking this morning that if I were not married I should love to throw up Architecture, and live as economically as possible until I could make money by writing. Probably it is well for me that I cannot follow my own devices; but my heart is in writing, and I don't care a little bit about Architecture. Any way, the thought reveals my heart."

In the following year I had opened a second office at Dover, and was kept very hard at work. I was thus closed in more than ever, and more ready than ever to revolt. The conditions were such as to entirely prevent my normal and natural growth. I was

beginning to feel that these conditions must be broken up. None the less I worked faithfully at my calling, though realising that the time was coming when I should no longer be able to wait. As usual, it was in periods of loneliness that these feelings broke out.

"FOLKESTONE, *March 20th*, 1883.

"I have been thinking a good deal about this Dover Office. I am getting unhappy at not being able to write, and fear that it will have a very depressing effect on me. I seem to have no outlet, and am engaged in work which is not natural to me. My views of life the last few weeks have been getting more and more gloomy; and I believe the cause lies in my mind being in prison. Of course, if it be necessary, I will face the evil, and try to conquer it; but it is difficult to believe that what is unnatural is necessary, especially when it makes one a pessimist, as I am fast becoming."

This time of loneliness was the worst I had had. Circumstances compelled my wife to remain away longer than usual, and to make matters worse, our servant had to go home because her mother was dying. I thus had to keep the house going and do my own cooking, while I had also two offices to attend to. The time had its humours, however; as, for instance, when I tried to skin and cook a rabbit that I found in the larder. I could not skin it without pulling its head off, and no amount of boiling would make it tender.

On looking back over this period of my life I can see that, not only was my natural development arrested, but also I was overworked and overworried in business. In order to build up a good practice, I tried to do the work of two men when I had scarcely the strength of one. It was probably through this that the sharp discipline of sleeplessness first began to fall upon me, slowly but surely growing into a habit from this time forward. Doubtless it has been a constitutional development, but at Folkestone circumstances favoured its appearance. I often had to take tea and coffee to keep myself awake for night work, sometimes not going to bed at all, in order that some drawing or specification or set of quantities might be finished by the time required. Then I had to bear the loss of a large sum of money,

due for work done, under circumstances which were exceptionally aggravating. It seems to me now that the pessimism into which I was drifting was largely due to the circumstances attending this loss, for they revealed to me the wide-spread rottenness of business morality, and the hopelessness of Right fighting against Might in Her Majesty's Courts of Justice.

Indeed, before I had withdrawn from business, so deeply was I impressed by my experience of the law, that I resolved that I would never again, save under real necessity, take any part in a law-suit. A judge has described three grades of liars as Liars, Damned Liars, and Experts. But what of the Judges? One of the ideas bred into me by my good old schoolmaster was, that the British Bench was high above criticism—not merely the symbol but the embodiment of all Wisdom and Justice. I have taken part in technical cases as a witness, and have seen a good deal of the criminal courts also, and I must confess that the British Bench has lost all the glamour which was cast around it in my boyhood. I have seen that a judge may become the fool of his own vanity and ignorance as well as another man—and this long before I knew anything of Trade Union or Socialist cases.

One judge—a thorough bully—before whom I once gave evidence, was foolish enough to give the reason for the verdict he solemnly delivered. A public body was the plaintiff, and I believe their claim was a perfectly sound one legally, and in accordance with public interest. It was a case for expert evidence on both sides. The reason the judge gave for dismissing the suit of the plaintiff public body was, that their case was supported by expert evidence, which was paid for, and was therefore unreliable. He entirely overlooked the fact that the defendant had to depend entirely upon expert evidence also. At the very worst the judge should have seen that the value of expert evidence is to keep the balance of lying on both sides as even as counter-lying can make it; and he should have understood it to be his duty to get at the truth which was to be found undoubtedly among all the lies—putting the evidence down at his own estimate. On the other hand, in a Criminal Court, I have seen a judge—who, in addition to being a bully, was also very deaf—so badger the witnesses and the jury, that the latter, in sheer bewilderment, acquitted the prisoner, who most certainly was guilty. The surprise of both prisoner and judge was amusing. The latter turned

to the jury and gave them a sound rating; and then acquitted the prisoner with the advice not to do it again.

But then to see a girl sentenced to death for killing her illegitimate child—! To hear her sharp scream ring through the court—! To see her fall fainting into the arms of a stolid policeman—! To see how the court, all along, had insisted on keeping to the FACTS of the case, with all the blindness of which only the man of FACTS can be guilty—! To think that Society imposes, year after year, this frightful torture for its own protection—! To see what a guilty frightened thing this Society is—as though it recognised that, for all its sins, Justice demanded its victims, and so set up its Temples of Justice, to offer human sacrifice therein for its own wrong-doings—! It was to all this that my eyes were beginning to open at Folkestone, so I might well feel that, with no lifework to support me, I was fast drifting into pessimism. And it was worth suffering the torture of loneliness, if only to discover it.

But what, I believe, made me more discontented than anything else was the compulsion I was under to compete actively with others for a livelihood. Whatever high-sounding names the Individualist may give to this competition, it still remains the ridiculous, inhuman and godless thing which the man of higher conscience sees it to be. The Individualist has got stranded among the fossils of past forms of life, because his Individualism is of a decaying type. The new living Individualism, which, in its reaction from the old, compels men to call themselves Socialists, sees that Individualism must take on a far higher form than that of the Manchester School, and, from a competitive materialist Individualism, must grow into a spiritual co-operative one.

This, too, I then began to see; though I could do little with the social question until the religious question was in the way of solution. It is hopeless to try to throw up your cap in the air, or to throw stones at objectionable objects, until you have some piece of solid ground to stand on. None the less, I grew more and more disgusted with myself when I saw what all my scheming and working to get on meant, and the blinding phrases of Individualism could no longer blind me. I could make no Life-ideal out of trying to get work that others needed more than I did, and could perhaps do better. I could not hide from myself the fact that, if I got the work, they did not get it, as most seem

capable of doing as soon as they feel a little pricking of conscience. I could not go home and rejoice with my wife that I had secured an appointment, when I knew that two or three other men would go home to their wives disappointed.

In Folkestone I saw, as I had seen in Liverpool, but now with fuller experience, that a complete revolution was needed. But I had no bottom to my own life, no ground to work from. I knew well that within myself I must first find the regenerating life which was needed to regenerate Society. I had not that life. It became more and more evident to me that I should have to go into the wilderness to find it.

CHAPTER XXI.

INTO THE WILDERNESS.

DEMOCRAT as I am, and democratic as I wish my religion to be, I find it difficult not to believe that God and I have entered into a personal and private relationship, which is of the very essence of our being—a relationship existing in the nature of things, my life being now spent in its discovery and unfolding. It was Emerson who first brought fully to my consciousness the confidence which has grown into this high faith—the conviction that life was reliable, and that a life of faith would work—could not possibly be a failure. But before Emerson thus helped me, I had already begun to live so, from an instinct which Emerson only made more clear to me. Thus I have found myself, since those early days, acting more and more naturally and necessarily on the understanding, that my business was to follow my fate, to unroll my destiny, convinced at last, beyond the possibility of questioning, that no harm could come to me. Not to live so would be to me absolute suicide. I should become an unreal thing in an unreal Universe immediately; and should be so convicted of unreality, that the will to live would fail me.

And now, after living so long a real life among real things, my religion is no matter of opinion, or of faith, or even of knowledge. It is a matter of consciousness. So far as I have lived, so far have I become acquainted with Reality, and the acquaintance grows even as I am writing, so that I find it difficult to get this story done with. The chapter that I prospectively dig out as a canal becomes a tidal river, which taxes my engineering faculties, and makes it very difficult to get my burden of meaning conveyed to the reader. This, at least, will become clear to him—that the life I am trying to describe is inevitable, original; and that imitation is wholly out of the question. You

may get beliefs so. Creeds can be handed down from generation to generation. The real life, the life in which each of us realises what God meant him to be, the life in which man becomes aware of himself as a reality in a real Universe, only now moving about for his education in a world of phenomena—this life, because it is real, must always be each according to its kind, none like another. Then, when we live with God, is the highest type of Individuality stamped upon us; and we cannot escape from it.

Of course the reader will say that man must follow his fate. But there is a difference. I have been aware that I had a destiny, I have believed in it, I have set out to meet it, I have been sure that all I had to do was to discover it. And so God has become revealed in me, and I find my Fate to be my Fortune. But I cannot share my fortune with another. I can only tell how I was led to its discovery. A millionaire myself, all my wealth would not endow a chair in a Theological College. I can only tell the world that there is gold on the Klondike, and that he that is man enough may fetch it—the poorest as well as any. For wealth and a college outfit do not tend to pioneering, but rather to staying at home with the contented discontented ones.

The real will to live appears to me to be this will to find one's destiny, which I have been describing; and this, of course, implies an Eye that can see far beyond our seeing. Indeed, it is really inconceivable—this Blind Will of the pessimist Philosopher. You are called upon to imagine a will from which are withdrawn the essential qualities of willing. Will without purpose is a mere philosphic abstraction, with no real existence, just as the Spencerian Absolute is—a mere Word-fetish—no more respectable than the Wood-fetishes that aroused the withering scorn of the Hebrew Prophets. "They are like a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers, and speak not; they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil; neither is it in them to do good." "They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths." But are these wooden things any more unreal and impossible than a Will that cannot know, and an Absolute that cannot be known? A Will that is unconscious, a First Cause that cannot be related—how can such helpless mental figments have been set up as gods by serious philosophers; and how can they have drawn around them

such a crowd of worshippers? What have these people done that they should have such an Irony of Fate brought upon them at this end of the Nineteenth Century? I think that the sin of Philosopher and of People alike is the love of cheapness. Possessed of little of the real wealth of life, they seek a cheap world to live in. And indeed they have it! But I am drifting too far from my story.

I am not aware, on the other hand, that I have ever followed other than my own will in directing my life amid its many difficulties; and I am sure that my will has not been of the passive sort, but rather initiative and constructive, and often very impatient; yet I know that a higher Will than mine has all the time had a grip of me, if only as Way-opener and Way-closer. For the extreme limitations of my life, the impossibility I find of doing other than one certain thing at a certain time, the warnings I get, like Paul of old, not to kick against the pricks, the manner in which I find my Way of Life ever closing in more and more about me —the thorns by the wayside closer—together with the knowledge that I have neither the strength nor the ability to do anything out of the common, but only the will to do it, the felt necessity of doing it, in spite of my own unfitness—all this, with much else besides, leaves me no choice as to beliefs; and indeed makes any question of beliefs seem rather ridiculous. For a man does not believe his experiences. He is conscious of them. And if he finds that they are consistent with each other, and follow a straight line of development, and set him to work far beyond his capacity, and that the work tells, though far below his ideal—then he knows that his experiences are deeply rooted in Reality, and abandons himself to them through all difficulties and sorrows. It is the Higher Life which Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith taught, based no longer upon Dogma, but upon subjective and objective experiences.

But it is not a life of Perfection, as they taught. A man's moral life is limited just as his time is limited. He cannot do everything. It is also limited just as his strength is limited He cannot do everything. It is also limited just as the Moral Law itself is limited by its dual demand for Truth and Kindness. He cannot do everything. It is also limited just as his knowledge is limited. He cannot know how to do everything. The Higher Life is the Highest Art—the Art of Living with God

and Man freely—an Art which man may never master fully, and yet in the pursuit of which, if he has worked hard and studied faithfully, he may reach his third period of ease and confidence and liberty—when people will admire him hugely or denounce him bitterly, who do not in the least understand him. Yet, Master of his Art as he may be called, you only have to lie on your face on the grass to see how imperfect his Art is—not because his imitation of grass is not perfect, but because, after all, there has not been the majestic simplicity and grace and power in his work which the open eye can begin to see in God's.

No; the Higher Life means simply the faithful student of Art; the Highest Life, the faithful student who is also possessed by his Art—the Master, the Genius. There is no question about perfection. There is only the question of consecration leading slowly and painfully to a certain confident swing and sweep of the brush, where first there was but laboured stippling and glazing—and an occasional sense of pain as we realise that all the ease and power we have trained ourselves to can yet leave us, in our highest achievements, so infinitely far from God. But to have brought our Art so far that we begin to have a fellow-feeling with God—that is worth everything, even though we sit back disheartened with actual achievements. I sometimes think that the end of all work for God or man is the development of this God-sympathy; or why does he put so many hindrances in our way in performing it? Is it not that we may learn diviner qualities than success alone can ever teach us?

All of which has been suggested to me by reaching the point in my story at which I determined to sell out and go into the wilderness. When I had squeezed Folkestone dry, the next fruit fell to me. I had worked up my practice to a point which it could scarcely rise above, at least in my heterodox hands. An opportunity came for selling out, and I gladly seized it. We proposed to take a cheap house near London, where we could live economically, while I tried what I could do at writing. It was then that I first discovered over what a frightful area London is eating up the country. It was only in the village of Ballingdon in Essex, separated by the river Stour from Sudbury in Suffolk, that we were able to find the cheap and roomy house that we wanted.

Ever since that time in Liverpool I had been dreaming that

I could write a novel. In Australia I began an attempt in this direction. In Folkestone, before my work had become so exacting, I continued the experiment. At this country house at Ballingdon I carried it still further. Now of course no man who is going through a process of making up his mind, as I was, can produce a novel other than of a very subjective sort. I had come to realise this, and to see that subjectivity was the thing to be avoided. So I tried a very objective story, and wrote a great deal of it. But though I had fine ideas as to what I wanted to do, I could not breathe the breath of life into the characters. And the same with other things I attempted. The only product of this period which I have since thought worth publishing was LIFE IN APARTMENTS, which appeared some years after in the LABOUR PROPHET. It was a series of short sketches suggested by my past life in lodgings, and by the life I was then living in the country.—A very harmless performance.

This long and faithful apprenticeship in writing was not wasted, however. To it I am indebted for a certain sense of oneness with my pen which makes writing an artistic satisfaction to me—as though I could now entirely trust my pen to express what is in me, with help on its part rather than hindrance. The pen has become, as it were, an extension of my body, a living organ, through which my life flows freely. In those days I found so much difficulty in writing, that, as a kind of heavy-weight exercise, I translated chapter after chapter of what I had written into blank verse, and then translated it back again, trying to retain some added excellence of language, while restoring its former freedom. This, I believe, educated my ear, too; so that I could hear what I was writing—the fall of the sentences, and the rhythmic sound of their falling—as important to the expression of ideas as clearness of utterance is, and as necessary as clearness of utterance to the artistic joy of expression. So great a pleasure is the use of my pen to me now, that I can often write with ease, when want of sleep has made reading impossible—a dangerous ease, and yet one for which I am grateful; for it enables me to make the most of my limited powers. I have always had the greatest confidence in taking trouble, as the sole condition of the emancipation of our faculties. Only some painstaking apprenticeship can enable us to attain any true liberty. And this liberty must be our own, gained in our own way, and not in another's.

I must, by this time, have entirely lost that regard for the Sensational Philosophy which I had acquired at Meadville, at least as an inclusive statement of the facts of life; but I still clung to the idea that a Philosophy was possible which should be really inclusive and unifying. I read Herbert Spencer and Mansel, and concluded that both were on the wrong track in their doctrine of the Absolute. Indeed, so absurd did Herbert Spencer's method of reconciling Religion with Science appear to me, that I commenced making copious notes towards a book on the subject. But the further I got, the more impossible did I find it to see how all the facts of life could be grasped by the Intellect, and reduced to a System of Philosophy. Mr. Spencer does the trick by looking at life with one eye. All the facts which he can get within the embrace of his System he sees. All the rest he turns his blind eye upon. No man who had a grain of humour in his constitution could have presented his famous "Reconciliation" without laughing hugely. I think reading Spencer at this time must have caused me finally to abandon all hope in Philosophy. He filled me alternately with anger and amusement. God alone can write a SYNTHETIC PHILOSOPHY, without leaving nine-tenths of life outside. Man has not the grasp of the subject that God has.

Systems!—When shall we be men enough to live with life at first hand, finding all Systems stuffy? It is in a man's own daily life that the reconciliation of Religion and Science must be worked out, just as the reconciliation between Fate and Free Will is worked out. We do not want Systems, but Facts; and a whole-souled Man to face the Facts squarely. He will find that his intellect cannot grasp all the complex dualism of life, but he will learn to accept all and include all, and, in his own living, reduce all to such Synthetic Practice as he can attain to. Then, in place of Systems of Philosophy and Systems of Religion, we shall have Biographies and Autobiographies, which fetter nobody. And it is to be hoped that in those days we shall have no more Disciples, for they would soon bring all the old evils back again.

And so, too, the idea must vanish of the strait gate which all must enter, and the narrow way which all must take. It is the old folly of supposing that man's intellect can grasp the whole of life, with the added folly of declaring that what one man could see was all there was to be seen, and imposing it as a limitation on

everybody. There are as many Ways of Life as there are people to travel along them. No man can stake out the road to God for another. The whole conception of there being Systems and Ways and Masters and Guide-books is a very childish one, and one that man will grow out of—some day. All of which Mr. Spencer helped me to discover. And it was a great clearance to get rid of these Philosophers; though, of course, when I speak of getting rid of them, I mean only in the sense in which I had already got rid of the Bible. There is a deal to be learned from them—hints, suggestions, inspirations to be gathered—but you no longer concede all the claims made for them, and refuse to shut up your soul between their covers. I have since read Edward Caird and Thomas Hill Green, for instance, with much admiration and advantage; though their Metaphysic seems very inadequate and inconclusive.

I suppose I must have felt a good deal run down before leaving Folkestone, for one of the aims I had in going into the country was to make myself stronger by gardening. And we had a very delightful old garden at Ballingdon, with fine trees about us, and the river Stour running along the bottom. Gardening, however, did not answer my expectations. The exercise tired me out too completely, and I found I could get more good in a given time from walking. And yet, in another way, my work in the garden gave me a permanent lift in life, and opened my inward eyes very considerably. The value of these lessons from life is that you never go back from them. Knowledge you may forget—not Art. It becomes a part of you.

I have never thought much of the saving grace of earning your living on the soil. It may be good for some, but to make a panacea of it is ridiculous. These regulations and limitations make life so extremely little. Yet I thank God for my garden. I worked therein until it became part of me. My self-consciousness seemed to include the garden also. I felt with it, understood it, and steadied my own restless life by intercourse with its strong quietness. I found myself working with God in that garden—doing my part, and leaving God to do his; and I learned that God himself could not grow good cabbages there without my faithful assistance. Of course there were the moral lessons learned, but these were quite secondary to the quickening of my spiritual nature which work with spade and hoe brought me,

The soil, the crops, the birds, the weeds, the sun, the rain—myself working among them—all coming together and operating together—produced something more than fruit and vegetables. A dawning consciousness of God, and of my being a fellow-worker with God, was evolved out of them. Through this garden I found it easy to understand that all life was animated equally by a Divine Presence, and that everywhere God lurked ready to reveal himself.

At Ballingdon we had a second son born. These children had a deep influence on me—the reality of them sank into me. They impressed me as being so much more than my children, so much more than Humanity's children—as being, indeed, God's children also. I could not believe that their parents had even the chief concern and responsibility respecting them. Behind us lay generation after generation, away back to the first beginnings of things on this Planet. But, in all this string of events, I found no sufficient cause for those two boys and my love for them. The deep sense of my own feelings towards them demanded infinitely more than a cast-off ball of fire for a background. If I nursed them in sickness, or played with them in health, or, still more, if I bent over them and watched them in their sleep, unconscious and yet so full of life, and realised what they had been and what they might grow to be, and all the endless forces which were at work in them, the effect was an irresistible conviction that God was here in our children, just as he was in our garden, and that our love for them and our service for them were acts of divine co-operation.

At the bottom of our garden was a river, I have said; and there were wooden steps down to the water, and all was unprotected save by some hazel bushes in places. I commenced making a bank to set a fence on to prevent my little boy from being drowned. After a time his mother said she did not see that anything I could do would quite remove the danger—she would rather trust the child. So I stopped my work, and the little one was told that beyond a certain path he was on no account to go, unless some one was with him. And so discipline and confidence went hand in hand to give the child all the freedom possible to him, and the child became his own protection against drowning. Often have I gratefully remembered that decision against external fences in favour of the expectation of

obedience; and it became one of the ideals on which we brought up our children.

Another ideal was, never to allow idling about, but always to see that the children had plenty to do. The result was that we never had any trouble, never any anxiety, save the small amount which is sure to arise when children are by no means dummies. If England would but make up her mind that all mothers should have the opportunity of caring for their little ones so—! But walk through Drury Lane, and ask yourself—"Where is the children's chance?" If that do not make you into an ardent Social Reformer, you must have a special brutality and stupidity and ignorance of your own, more dangerous to Society than the same qualities in the denizens of the lowest slums. Give the children a chance?—Yes, to compete with the German worker, and then go to heaven!—but not to live their own human lives in all the fulness and beauty that God has made possible for them.

The third great influence in my life in the country was the stars. It was my habit to go for a walk the last thing at night to enable me to sleep; for even here was growing upon me that sleeplessness which has been such a constant limitation in my life—twin companion to that other limitation of incapacity to live alone. But I had some compensation in my night walks; and the stars sank silently down into my soul. I learned the constellations and their names, and became their familiar friend, and parted with them one by one as they sank beneath the horizon, knowing how punctual would be their re-appearance to perform again their march across the mighty vault of the sky. Time and eternity, space and infinity, seemed to combine together in the appalling periods and distances of their movements—I no more in their presence than the grub I trod on in my garden—but yet, in their presence, infinitely more also. For my own life was unspeakably greater than theirs, subject to higher laws, capable of vaster developments. Yet we were one—the stars and I. Often did I lose myself in contemplation. Often, too, did I wonder at my own greatness as it became revealed to me by comparison with theirs. Thus did the stars help me to realise the vast range of my being—a worm, a god; nothing, everything; and all that lay between the two extremes.

But, deeper than anything else, my new religious life was

founded on the reality of my home life—on the spiritual union which made it, in my own experience, a piece of the solid rock of things. I cannot write of all this, save in words the most hopelessly inadequate. Clough's Poem, WIRKUNG IN DER FERNE, is the only piece of literature that I can call to mind as at all adequately expressing what my home has been, and still is, to me; and even it fails entirely to carry forward its conception of human union to that divine union of which it is the image in our earthly life, revealing to us, with an intensity of reality and of meaning which makes the words themselves a futile platitude, that GOD IS LOVE.

My home has been, and is, the Mother of my soul. It has taught me, chastened me, inspired me, sheltered me from the wild impulses of my own will, and enabled me, so far as I have been able, to convert passion into power. But it has been infinitely more than a maternal care and love in my life. It has been a spiritual fact—as if a piece of very God in my own life, to enable me to know a little of what God is. But only those can understand me here who have themselves experienced the same indescribable blessedness.

I think this must be, perhaps, the deepest reason why, since marriage, I have lived so ill in solitude—as if the reality of life had departed from me—as if I myself were now no longer real without it, despite all I have said of the individualising experiences I have passed so painfully through. But I do not quite understand it. That it is no mere weakness, I am certain; any more than it is no mere weakness that I cannot live without oxygen. It is rather, I think, an endowment that carries its needs with it, and links me thus more closely to the chain of real being.

In such ways as I have tried to tell, my life in the country, centred in my happy home, and radiating all around, even to the stars, built up within me an invincible confidence in God, and the beginning of a consciousness of him which has since continued to deepen. It seemed as though a new life were rising up within me, which I could not explain, or even understand, but which was none the less real and reliable. Three years I lived there, in faith that something would come of it; and yet often impatient at the way in which life was slipping away, and nothing yet done. The thirty years of which I had written to my wife in Liverpool passed over my head, and still nothing was accomplished. It was sometimes heavy work, this plodding away in faith, and

[*To face p.* 184.

because I could do nothing else. But the result of it all lives in me now, and can never die. In the Art of Life, nothing is ever lost that has once been acquired.

I know that the contents of this chapter will appear very unsatisfactory to many. They will feel a want of connexion between premise and conclusion, and the very conclusion will elude their grasp. There appears to me to be no help for this. It seems so impossible to communicate in terms of the Intellect the processes of a growing Consciousness. Only some similarity of experience will enable the reader to understand what I mean. Perhaps it may be possible, some day, to make these processes clearer to the undeveloped man; and yet I question it; for who could make Love clear to him who had never loved? When all was said, he would only be able to recognise certain of the phenomena of Love; but would have no conception whatever of the living impulse which Love itself is.

I must suppose, indeed, that I myself am but just beginning to understand the meaning of my own experiences; for certainly I have never so clearly grasped their total significance as I have during this past year of enforced retirement. I still feel that I have almost everything to learn about man's higher life. At the same time I am compelled to the conclusion that the impressions of the senses are not more reliable than the impressions of consciousness, the worth and nature of each set of impressions having to be learned by experience. Also, in both cases, the impressions come first, and then the gradual understanding of them. The method of Religion, therefore, from this point of view, becomes that of extending the scope of man's self-consciousness. When this truth has been reached, we find the whole of life appearing to us in a different aspect—how different I do not suppose I have yet learned fully. To me it comes simply as the birth of a new sense, a new power of insight, a new conviction of oneness with all things. It by no means takes me from the practical work of life, but fills the practical work with an altogether fresh beauty, and myself with perfect confidence in helping it forward. Ignorance and error are not eliminated, but we are taken behind the veil, and see that provision is made for a continuous march forward.

These three years in the country—how different in their results from the former years at Folkestone! I had gone to Folkestone

in obedience to external necessity, from which I could find no way of escape. It was a step foreign to my whole nature, and apparently quite off the line of my natural development. So the life almost died within me, only showing itself in volcanic outbursts of discontent and despair. I went to the country in obedience to an inward necessity, which I was bold enough to trust in spite of all appearances, and the very reasonable challenges of Mrs. Grundy. Folkestone, for the time being, was a degradation; Ballingdon, a permanent elevation of my whole life, from which I have never receded. Yet I accept Folkestone, too, as part of my necessary discipline. It was crossing a deep valley to reach a higher mountain. But I hope no reader of this will think of following my example. There must be no imitation. Each must find God on the lines of his own development.

CHAPTER XXII.

POLITICS AND RELIGION.

ALL this expansion and deepening of consciousness was taking place in my country home, though it was a slow and stumbling process. Country walks, and the flowers and birds that I watched and learned the names of, and boating on the river, and water-colour sketching, and the village churches wherein we sometimes found ourselves on Sundays, and the quiet grave-yards, and the patient peasantry—all these sank into me, and became part of me, helping me to grow more widely aware of myself and of the world around me. Never before had I understood the intoxication of the Springtide, and the joy of the awakening life of Nature. Since my return to England, God had departed from sea and land and cloud; but then he was a purely objective God, outside of all things. Now this new sense of oneness with flowers and trees and stars brought me to God in quite a different fashion—but I do not know how to describe it. Like a sponge lying in water, I seemed embosomed in Nature, and to drink in God from my divine environment.

But I could not formulate anything from this awakening of my being. Long I remained as much a Sceptic and Agnostic as ever. Occasional fits of yearning to preach came over me, but I knew that I had yet no message, and it did not seem that a message was any nearer. Meanwhile I was as anxious as ever to help the people, and was beginning to interest myself actively in political and social problems. I did something towards aiding the effort then being made to re-establish the Agricultural Labourers' Union. I even got so far as to give an address at a little village meeting in a public house. But the whole thing appeared so hopeless—the men so helpless, their difficulties so enormous. I was also much interested in a strike among the mat-weavers at Glemsford, and the formation of a Union among

them. What I learned then showed me the weak point of village industries—the workers left in the hands of the employer, with no alternative when work runs slack or wages are abated. I often think with a sad heart of those small Suffolk industries, where the poor are sweated so badly, and the world hears nothing of it.

During the general election of 1885, I witnessed a village riot which produced a profound impression on me. It was the first election under the extended franchise, and the Squirearchy were doing their best to thwart the act of enfranchisement. On the other hand, the new electors were in a high state of elation, not knowing that political without economic emancipation would be mere wind in their stomachs. The riot in question was really caused by the scandalous injustice of the Tory Justices, who refused to provide a polling place for a large manufacturing village with four hundred voters, the men being thus compelled to vote at another village four miles distant. In this manufacturing village there was no Squirearchy. The clergyman was a good old man, who was assisted in his duties by his son; and both were loved for their devotion to their parishioners, quite irrespective of politics. It was well known, indeed, that the four hundred would vote solid for the Liberal candidate, with but three or four exceptions. This action was of very doubtful legality, and was strongly protested against. But, against Tory power, protest was useless. Smarting under a sense of injustice, these four hundred men marched from one village to the other, led by a band, with the view of counteracting the attempt to disfranchise them. On their arrival, they found the arrangements for polling wholly inadequate. Crowding around the polling station, they were assailed with taunts and insults by a Tory farmer. The result was, first the hustling of the farmer, and then stone throwing, and then the reading of the riot act by the Tory Justices from the Conservative Committee Room, and the telegraphing for policemen and soldiers. After that, the village was given over to lawlessness, and one public house was wrecked, and one or two houses had their windows broken. But there was never any connection established between these acts and the outraged voters. And nothing whetever was done to quell the disorder, which was at first mere horse-play, and then allowed to drift into riot through pure incapacity and cowardice. The

few policemen in the village stood looking on helplessly. One man, of generous instincts and known integrity, and with a clear head on his shoulders, could have overcome the whole difficulty —save, perhaps, the difficulty which these impossible men in office would have made for him.

Some sixty soldiers arrived by rail, late in the afternoon, when all was over, and the village perfectly quiet. As they marched through to the police station, the people had a laugh at the folly of their superiors, in making all this display of force when it was now useless. But their superiors laughed last. Darkness fell. There were no lights in the village street. The polling station was still open, but deserted, save by its officials. In the light that shone from the doorway I stood talking with a friend, who, with myself, had witnessed the whole proceedings. A poor old woman and a half idiotic lad joined us. Suddenly they fell to the ground. I then saw dimly, in the darkness, a line of policemen and soldiers advancing past us up the wide village street, the soldiers in the centre, and the police on each side knocking over the people they met with their truncheons. But my friend and I were spared, though the old woman and the semi-idiot boy were bludgeoned, the blood of one of them staining my friend's cuff. Time after time this bloody march through the village was repeated. And then the public houses, to which many had fled for safety, were entered, and the occupants ordered off the premises. Outside, they had to run the gauntlet of a double file of policemen, who belaboured them with their truncheons. A newspaper reporter in one of the houses was allowed to remain. After the clearance, the police returned, and, with most brutal and filthy language, boastfully displayed the blood on their truncheons, one producing his in two halves, broken on the head of some unlucky person.

On the following Sunday I went to the village Church, to hear what the rector might have to say in his sermon. He was known as a good and generous man. After deploring the disgrace which had befallen their village, and denouncing the sin of disorder, he pleaded with his hearers that they should forgive the poor ignorant rioters. But this did not seem quite so funny as to see a prominent man in office march proudly up the Church, with the Tory colours displayed conspicuously in his buttonhole. And all this in a place devoted to the worship of Jesus!

To further assert the claims of Law and Order, perfectly innocent and harmless men, but who happened to be prominent politically, were summoned, remanded to the Assizes, and tried before a judge, who did his best to get them convicted, aided in his efforts by policemen who lied to the verge of heroism. But the police lied too heavily, and the counsel for the prisoners was too clever, and the jurymen were too honest, for Law and Order to override Justice in this instance—but it was only by the skin of their teeth that these good men, who had no more to do with the riot than I had, escaped a long term of imprisonment. For the judge was just in the mood to righteously make examples of them.

And then the public were never told the truth by the newspapers. The reporter, for instance, who saw the bludgeoning, and what followed, knew well enough that he was not paid to tell the truth, and did not tell it—save privately. The real facts of the case were suppressed; only the phenomena of the riot were allowed to be published. Whether the paper were Liberal or Tory, it made no difference; the public were wilfully deceived by men who knew what was expected of them. And so it is with our press in such matters, as I have since experienced plentifully. And I am describing this episode now, in order to put my readers on their guard—that they may never believe a story of wrong attributed to men smarting under a sense of injustice as reported in any paper whatever that is read by respectable people. It may happen that occasionally the truth does get told, but only so very rarely, that the benefit of the doubt should always be given to the alleged wrong-doer. I speak of what I know. The fundamental facts are kept back; they are not asked for; only the phenomenal facts are made known; even then, with much suppression on the one side, much exaggeration on the other.

And the Courts of Justice are as false in these matters as the newspapers. There is not a judge in England who would allow counsel to tell a jury the real facts about such a riot as the one I have recorded; so that, even if these men had been guilty of rioting, it would have been impossible for even-handed justice to have been dealt out in the matter. And the reason is, that we do not set first before us the maintenance of Truth and Justice and Humanity, but of Society and of Systems and of Institutions

and of Customs and of Law and Order. These unreal and unsubstantial things we prefer to maintain, at the expense of real things and substantial. And the reason, again, for this is, that we are ourselves unreal; that we have not yet awakened from the dream of phenomenal existence into the real life of conscious Reality. And so our Journalism and our Justice must remain the mockery they are, until we are evolved into real Men and real Women—a divine process that we may co-operate in. I see no other way for improvement.

But I am no Orientalist. I call this phenomenal existence a dream, only because it must be so to him who is only aware of phenomena. To him who knows Reality, phenomena have a reality of their own also; just as a tool is really a tool to a man, but no tool at all to an idiot or a monkey. So deeply are these great moral and social problems rooted in the infinite abyss of Being. Which thought finally settles for me the question of the value of cursing the Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites! It is useless. We have a work of evolution to carry through, with God and the Universe for our partners, and cursing will only waste our time and blind our judgment. It is almost as untrue to facts as the sin we denounce is. Yet cursing is a stage of development far ahead of the comfortable Sunday dinner period, as the Judge dines, and the Journalist, and the Parson who preaches to them, and asks them to pardon wrong-doers.

I will briefly sketch the sequel to this story of wrong in high places. In the manufacturing village in question, the good old rector died; and it was hoped and expected that the son, who had served so loyally as his father's curate, would succeed to the vacant living. Strong petitions were sent to the presenting powers. But they were useless. A High Churchman and a stranger was sent to school the people to a new discipline; and I think it very probable that the discipline has proved successful. Moreover, the Liberal candidate has long since carried the constituency with him into the bosom of the Unionist party, retaining his seat during the time of transition by pledges which he appears to have forgotten. He has, however, interested himself in keeping prison-made matting off the market. So, Ireland waits, and Labour waits, and Justice slumbers.

I was active in Politics, and helped to form a Liberal Association in Ballingdon. But before I left the country, the glamour of

Politics had departed. I do not think I understood why at the time; but, as with the Labourers' Union, so with these Liberal Associations, I felt at last hopeless. I believe it was that I saw that the people were being played with; that all their enthusiasm, all their hopefulness, all their confidence in their "betters," was being exploited by ambitious men, who had nothing in common with the people—who ostentatiously displayed their superiority, and were forwarded in their own ambitious career, while the people they had used like the cart-wheels of their progress were left as deep in the mud as ever.

And I felt the pain of the poor man's lot so keenly, and saw how little these Politicians could do for him, and how empty were the cries that the poor man waved his hat to, and how hopeless were the hopes that were flaunted before his eyes while such politicians were trusted. All this energy and enthusiasm wasted for want of a Man to represent it truly in Parliament!—Indeed, how is it possible that the warm heart of the People should pulse through that House of all the Interests—save those of simple Humanity—and that frightful House of Lords behind it! Will the People themselves arise some day, like some new Cromwell, and clear out these impossible play-actors? Alas, the People, too, have their own particular follies. We must work on patiently, through all channels, and try to grow ourselves bigger.

The question of Immortality exercised my mind somewhat at Ballingdon, and in a peculiar manner. Living so much at home with Nature, communing with all the life about me, and entering into fellowship with the stars, noting with swelling heart the punctual return of the Spring, seeing in the country churchyards the marsh-marigold and the cherry-blossom laid in infinite hope on the humble graves of the dead, all nourished within me an irresistible conviction that not all of us dies at death; and the new and deeper life growing up within me confirmed that. The only time when I had any real doubt was occasionally when I was waking from sleep, and before full consciousness returned. Then I found within me an unaccountable fear, without cause or reason, that death would end all. When full consciousness came, the impression wholly passed. I can only describe the feeling as being similar to that with which one wakes up in a state of depression and apprehension without at all knowing why —a vague sense of something being wrong, or of some evil lying

ahead, which I suppose is familiar to all of us. For some time this mild form of waking nightmare would now and again occur, but it is some years now since I last experienced it.

I must add, also, that the question of immortality has never given me any personal concern. All my past thinking on the subject has been on account of others, and especially on account of those sadly cramped and undeveloped lives which one sees everywhere. My own life, whatever its sufferings, has always been so deep and full, that the present time has occupied all my real thinking. From the day I became converted, as already recorded, Heaven and Hell ceased to have any vital interest for me, although their interest before had been so tremendous. But where the thought of my own future ceased, there thought for that of others began; and it remained still the same when my faith in Christianity departed. I wanted, for instance, to be able to believe that the poor sailor, dying in the ship's fo'castle, was not sinking away into nothingness.

Of course the question does not trouble me now, although I know so little about it. God has entered into my life—that I cannot doubt; and neither can I doubt the permanence of our relationship. Where I can trust for myself, I can trust for all the world. I am not going to have an exclusive, or even a rare, chance. Apart from this conviction, there would still be something of that aristocratic element in my faith, which, as a Christian, I deplored—myself saved, while so many were going to destruction. I wanted a democratic faith, a religion which made me equal with all, though still different from all; a religion which produced the sense, without any sort of hypocrisy, of a real equality before God, this real equality becoming the ideal of all institutions and customs affecting our earthly existence. But of course not a dead level of equality, but rather one in which infinite difference finds place—an equality based deep in the equal life of all in God, but rescued from deadness by the endless variety of that life—an equality, therefore, out of which true freedom springs.

In associating these religious ideas with social life, as well as in putting them in this high form, I am again getting beyond the time of which I write. Yet the first cropping up of all this took place then. Unfortunately I have little contemporary evidence of my thinking during this period—a few letters, and

LIFE IN APARTMENTS, and some notes of political addresses, and the daily Diary of my doings. I will give some extracts from the letters as far as they appear to be of any value. The date of our leaving Folkestone was July 23rd, 1884.

"BALLINGDON, *February 19th*, 1885.

"My mind has been much exercised on Politics. This morning I went a long walk to think it all out. I don't know what to do, for it seems I must decide either to do more political work, or less. At first I felt that I ought to do more. I realise, as I never did before, that Politics are of vast importance to the future of this country. Somehow, the life of the people must be raised; and I believe that Politics must be the way. Politics means Sociology now—the whole business of social life. The next ten years, I believe, will decide England's future for perhaps a century.

"My unfitness for this work lies in my love of home and the quiet enjoyment of life. I don't think I could stand public life. If I thought I could, I believe I should feel obliged to take it up. But then you could not stand it any better than I could, for I should have to be from home so much.

"Any way, I am beginning to realise the supreme importance, the absolute necessity, indeed, of raising the level of the people's life. It must be done; and I am sure no work will satisfy me which does not tend in this direction."

"LONDON, *October 17th*, 1885.

"I have been having a long talk on Socialism with ——. He calls me a Pessimist, and says I am as bad as Clough! He had to leave me about six, but I spent the evening in his room, reading Clough and Kropotkin. To-morrow I propose to hear Mrs. Besant in the morning, Edward Aveling in the afternoon, and William Morris in the evening.

"One of my old preaching fevers has come on. I am really beginning to feel that I shall be compelled to do it. I *must* get into immediate contact with the needs of men, and try to help them. But I am in no hurry about it."

"BALLINGDON, *January 29th*, 1886.

"Enclosed I have been writing to-day"—the commencement of LIFE IN APARTMENTS.—"It is one of the things that came

into my mind some mornings back, and has been running there since. I have the groundwork of another sketch to tack on to it suggested by a picture at the Salon Parisien—the only good painting in the place, and that a really good one. I have been tired to-day—did not sleep so well last night—and was very glad to have this to turn to, as I could not have settled down to other work. What I have written reflects my feelings pretty closely, or did so while I was writing."

"BALLINGDON, *February 1st*, 1886.

"I don't at all think of coming to Norwich at present."—Our youngest boy was ill there.—"If you stay on indefinitely, however, you will doubtless see me. At the same time I have almost made a solemn vow that I will never be left alone again. I wish you had the faculty for writing deeply philosophical letters that would give me something to think about. I've quite made up my mind to go and live at Cambridge, or in France, or somewhere, at the end of the three years. I'm clearly going to the devil, soul and body—and no jolly time by way of compensation. I don't see the good of it. But don't hurry the kid home on my account. . . .

"This morning, before breakfast, I commenced a sketch from my study window of one of the big elms. I have got it all pencilled in ready to begin colouring to-morrow. It was a beautiful sunrise effect behind the tree that started me on it."

This sketch, so suddenly commenced in loneliness, was the first start I made in water-colour drawing since the little I had done in Norwich. I have never had any natural aptitude for the work, however, though I have a great love for it. In this, as in everything else with me, even the smallest achievement is laborious and difficult.

"LONDON, *March 18th*, 1887.

"I shall not be home till to-morrow, as an Anarchist celebration of the Paris Commune is to be held at South Place this evening, and I want to attend it. I was so glad I was present last night"—at the International celebration of the Commune, where I heard Kropotkin and other speakers—"but it makes me shudder. I made a friend—a strange sort of man, who, after

considerable conversation, asked me to call on him. He understands Socialism thoroughly, but knows little of individual Socialists. He speaks German and French, and is a foreigner of some sort.

"After the meeting I walked the streets, thinking and seeing—sad thoughts, grim sights. Had one no home, the world would verily seem mad. It is a strange place we have brought our little boys into."

I have said occasionally that I could not face the social problem until the religious problem was in the way of being solved. This was undoubtedly true to some extent, but contemporary evidence shows that my memory exaggerated the extent. All through this time at Ballingdon I was really facing both problems, though I still placed the solution of the religious problem first. And it was not until I came to see the relation between the religious life and social reform that I could feel that there was any sound bottom to political effort. That was the time when the conception of the Labour Church dawned upon me—a time still a few years distant.

During this period I was much interested in a conflict going on among the Unitarians of the United States, which led to the organisation of a separate Western Conference. Some of the Western Churches demanded that Unitarianism should no longer stand upon a Christian, or even a Theistic, basis; but simply upon an Ethical basis. The difficulty has been healed over since then, and the result shows the danger of putting new wine into old bottles. In connection with this conflict I wrote a letter to UNITY, the organ of the Western movement, from which I give some extracts, because they indicate my position at the time.

"BALLINGDON, *July 12th*, 1886.

"Through the kindness of a friend I have just received some recent numbers of UNITY, and Mr. ——'s pamphlet. I have lived in America, studied at Meadville, and should be in a Unitarian pulpit to-day, if I could accept the Theistic and Christian position which Unitarianism demands. With regard to that position I have made no complaint, because it is clearly the right of every religious body to define where it stands. But I have always felt that Unitarianism has been making a great

mistake. It has seemed to me to be seeking an unnatural alliance with Orthodox Christianity, and failing in its duty to help those who cannot accept Christianity at all. It has appeared to rejoice in minimising the beliefs of believers, rather than in elevating the lives of unbelievers. It has not set itself to develop that strong and deep faith which underlies the scepticism of the age. It has been so arduously set on restoring the religion of the first century, that it has lost touch with the possibilities of religious development to-day.

"Unless Unitarianism is prepared to make a move, it will soon be difficult for it to justify its separate existence. The Orthodox Churches are moving fast enough; there are numbers of them where Liberal Christians may find a home. But where are the Churches in which those whom Mr. —— calls extremists can find a home? He says that these extremists 'for the most part care nothing for association with us.' I fear he is right if by 'us' he means Unitarians of the type which he represents. But it makes my wife and myself very unsettled here, when we know that in the Western States of America we might find hearts with whom we could work and worship, and never be asked whether we accepted the Christian faith. You men who stand for fellowship in righteousness may be sailing under false colours, as Mr. —— says; but we should wonderfully like to be in the same ship.

"Sometimes, as I sit in the garden in the cool of the evening, and drink in all the beauty of the quiet time, and think of the little ones put safely to bed, and see the mother of them coming to me across the grass, I find it an easy matter to believe in God and a future life. Suddenly, from over the wall, the cries of a child beaten by a passionate parent ring through the air, and make me shudder to the heart. The thermometer of faith falls, and I think how much remains to be done to make the earth what it should be. Am I a worse man, am I really less fit to stand in a pulpit, even, because I am so sensitive to human wrong that the vision of God gets blurred?

"I think that men of deepest faith are often those who can say little about it, especially to such as demand faith as a credential. If I had to converse with Mr. ——, I think I should feel myself almost an Atheist. But, though I cannot reach them, I rejoice to know that there are men in the West who would not crush the

little faith I can bring to the surface by demanding more of me. With men of principle a little faith goes a long way. I will not uncharitably say that the converse is true."

All that I saw going on in America at that time rekindled my hope that Unitarianism might be regenerated, and made a leading force in religious and social reform. I knew well that individual Unitarians were ready for such a movement; but my reviving religious life was not yet strong enough, when the above letter was written, for me to think it at all practicable to again take up that work.

Much help and encouragement came to me from America through the Ethical Movement. The published lectures of Dr. Felix Adler, the founder of the movement, and of William Salter, the Ethical lecturer of Chicago, convinced me of the fundamental reality of the moral life as no other writings have done. These men seemed to me to have gone to the bottom rock of life to build afresh a dwelling for the soul of man in place of the Temples that were crumbling, and to have found that rock reliable—still more—to have found not only a solid foundation, but the building material also that was needed. I was not quite satisfied, but I was unspeakably encouraged and helped. Mine was a still deeper search—for the spiritual rock beneath the moral—for that with which my soul could enter into conscious communion, to which, in some of their experiences, they seemed so very near approaching—so near, that at times they seemed as if the very Prophets of it, or at least the fore-tellers of its coming. In Emerson, Adler, Salter and Whitman, America has made the greatest contributions to my religious life which have come to me from literature. Here is an utterance of Felix Adler's in 1885—the highest I can find :—

"And now we come to the last point that characterises the goal towards which the entire Ethical movement tends. The ladder of moral experience is that on which alone we can climb to the heights of spiritual truth. There is an eternal kernel at the heart of man. Only the sharp instrument of moral discipline can lay that kernel open to our view, and make us acquainted with the most august and solemn facts concerning ourselves. How otherwise can we find a revelation of the eternal, if we do not find it in our own breasts? . . . Only if there is a divine

element in our own souls, are we capable of understanding a divine truth. And there we must seek it. In the abysses of our own souls speaks the invisible godhead. Far underneath the swift currents of our superficial daily life is sunk the Rhinegold of our purer, truer self. In the abysses we must seek it, I say. We will not find that divine element on the surface of our existence. We will not become aware of it in our secular pursuits. We will not lay hold of it by any mere speculative effort of the intellect. Only in our holiest moments, only in the darkest struggles of our conscience, only by sinking deeply into the gulfs of moral experience can we, by actual contact, become sure of that divine and indestructible power at the bottom of our souls."

Here is the ideal tendency of the Ethical movement, as set forth by its founder. But movements have a way of standing still on the road which their founders mark out for them, if not of deviating from them altogether. I am told that some Ethical friends in England have found a rock of offence in my publication of a pamphlet entitled, FROM ETHICS TO RELIGION—as though they could not trust in Ethics that tended Godward. And yet the whole significance of their movement, the sole reality of it in the world of real things, is expressed in these prophetic words from Dr. Adler.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FROM COUNTRY TO COLLEGE.

My three years of free country life gave me what I was seeking —a sufficient confidence in God to commence work with—a confidence which, indeed, demanded to be acted upon, in order that it might deepen through experience. I had found God in Nature, in my home, in myself. It remained now for me to find him in the world of affairs about me. So far had I succeeded in my great quest—to find God with a closed Bible. Ten years of my life had been spent in that. Yet I knew well enough that I had still almost everything to learn; and after another ten years of progress I have the same sense of need of growth, only more deeply impressed upon me. But I have found a Religion that will work; that will not only grow as life grows, and place no fetters upon it, but will rather be an inward inspiration which will make progress in every direction more rapid—a Religion, not imposed upon human life from without, and calling upon all men to conform to it; but one growing up naturally from within, as a primal force in personal and social development.

It would be futile to discuss whether I should have gained more by continuous growth, than I did by temporarily losing so much ground through the break in its continuity. Of course I gained by the break much that I could not have gained by continuity. Whether I should have been stronger and richer for another kind of experience it is impossible to say. It is enough for me to know that, in ten years, I had revolutionised my religious thought and life, and had indefinitely enlarged and deepened its foundations. I had recognised that my growth must be slow. I had accepted the fact that I could not expect to find my life work until I was thirty. Now that I was in my

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thirty-second year I was beginning to get on the track of it. In my forty-second year I can look back all along the line of my development, and see the unity of it, and much of its real meaning—at least so far as to be able to give this account of it. And I trust it will prove that summing up of the past which is sometimes necessary to free us for further progress.

What had I gained then by my unbelief, and subsequent struggles back to belief again? Certainly vastly more than Browning's Bishop Blougram allowed. In my new life I found conviction and confidence fundamental, and always rising up the clearer for deep-searching and sincere inquiry. During these ten years I had systematically accustomed myself to face all sorts of influences, and had persistently read and listened to those whose teachings took all sorts of directions. There was no influence and no teaching that I was afraid of, save of course such as was in itself obviously degrading. But even here I was careful not to accept the world's standard, but judged them for myself whenever I thought any good, or even any enlightenment, was at all likely to come from acquaintance with them.

In this freedom, alone, I found an enormous gain; and in the fearlessness which it brought me. It was like leaving a sick room, and getting out into the fresh air and the sunshine, and taking part in all the interests and activities of my fellows. It was being able to look all life hopefully in the face, and to feel a strong love for all, and a deep unity with all. There was no divorce in life—as between Nature and Grace, Revelation and Knowledge. There was the buoyant confidence that I should ever be learning more from every source of information, and thus be helped further on my way. But all words fall far, far short of the real change which at last definitely formed itself in my life—the freedom, the confidence, the oneness—and God the supreme reality uniting and quickening all. The language is not yet developed for expressing these things; or rather, perhaps, it needs the Master Poet to express them.

With this new life, it seemed not only natural, but necessary, to turn to preaching again. Once more I found Unitarianism the only door open to me; and, as before, wide open. In the summer of 1887 we removed to London, and in the autumn I commenced a year's course of study at Manchester New College. Thus I was able to further improve my limited education. This

year was invaluable to me, not so much in advancing my religious life—for I think few men find a Theological College do that for them—but rather in the wider range of intercourse which it opened out to me. After living so long in subjective solitude, the influence of professors and fellow students and other friends was the more beneficial.

The only contemporary records I have of this period are the notes of the sermons I preached. I have been reading some of them, and have been comparing them with the notes of sermons preached seven years before this. I have never looked through my old sermons before, and could scarcely have believed what frightfully uncomfortable feelings they would produce. After all I had lived through, and all the effort and pain it had cost me, to be able to say only this!—and to say it so ill! To think of all that had gone to the making of those sermons—not merely the bitter sorrows and struggles, and the love and happiness of later years, but the sea and the sky and the mountains and the flowers—all my intercourse with Nature and my fellow men! I often think sadly of the poor results of all my work for others—and now I realise, as I never have before, what a poor result I myself am. All this wealth of education, and so little to show for it!

There is another thing that strikes me in looking through these sermons. It is, the bad effect of preaching on the preacher. At least that conviction is impressed upon me very deeply as regards myself. The production of two good sermons a week is, for most men, impossible; and for all men it is impossible for them to be at their best through two sermons a week. It is quite conceivable that a man may produce his best work through daily drudgery in his study, for there he can drudge when he is in the drudging mood, and fill in the life when his mood is more vital. And he can always revise and boil down, and limit his quantity in order to improve his quality. So he can live in his work, and make his work living.

Then there is the effect of the congregation on the minister, which must, on the whole, be a conservative one—one which he must be continually fighting against if he would keep up his own progress. More especially must it be so if he visit his people much, and live his life with them. I always had a high ideal of the preacher being the pastor also, and making much of being the personal friend of those to whom he preached; and I

remember the shock with which I read the declaration of a popular London minister, that he never visited his people. I know now what a terribly absorbing effect it has on a man; how, unconsciously to himself, it draws the creative energy out of him; how it causes him to accept too narrow and personal a view of the duties of the pulpit, and how it hinders his vision from taking that wide sweep and far look which is demanded for reformation and progress. The preacher is too much fettered, too much kept down by custom and routine, too closely associated with all that needs reforming, to be often the prophet also, announcing the dawn of the day that is to be.

That the creative work of the world goes forward outside the Churches is a fact that has deeply impressed me. They seem, all of them, to stand by the truth of yesterday. The truth of to-morrow, taught by some great man or by some despised movement, comes from outside the Churches, and finds in these, as a mass, its greatest hindrance. I used to blame them for this; but looking through these old sermons of mine suggests to me that their conservatism arises from the very circumstances of their organisation, and that it is well nigh inevitable. I used to think that the fault lay in the nature of the religion taught in them. Now I fear that every Church, however free in its religion, will always be a backward institution; that their function is gradually to bring up the mass of the people to the level of the new life and leading outside them; but never themselves to be the homes of the most advanced life and leading. Which means that it is to the Poet and the Prophet that the world must look for its highest message, neither of whom is wanted in the pulpit, or would feel at home in the pulpit.

In the same direction runs the demand now made upon the preacher to be also the organiser of the practical work of the Churches. A preaching Church that does not practise its preaching in collective action has always, until recently, seemed to me an anomaly. I see now that there is much in the very nature of things to justify the preacher who visits nobody and organises nothing—whose congregation organise themselves just sufficiently to provide him with the means of livelihood and a platform. But this can scarcely ever be a common practice, because the Church has to be the larger home of the family, if only for the sake of the children. None the less it is a very great waste of

the higher forces of human life to set the preacher on so much organised effort that he lives a life of bondage rather than a life of freedom—that he is kept in the atmosphere of his work all the seven days of the week, that he cannot recuperate himself by immersion in outside influences, and that the mere machinery of church life robs him, not only of this, but also of many an hour which ought to be spent in his study, or in free communion with Nature. Certainly, if the Churches are to keep pace with the growing intelligence and dumb spiritual needs of the people, a new race of preachers will be needed who may rank among the Poets and the Prophets as great spiritual leaders.

I am not sure that, in this matter, the preachers themselves are not equally at fault with their congregations—a very warm-hearted and generous fault, and one which we cannot blame. The preacher, of all men, must feel terribly restless under the charge, whether coming from without or from within, of talking everything and doing nothing. For the Poet it is enough to be a Poet. Few Preachers, indeed, will feel it enough to be a Preacher. And yet I believe that, in the very nature of things, it should be enough, if preaching is to rise to the high level one wants to claim for it. I suppose, after all, the born preacher will take his own course; and probably that is where we shall have to leave the question. But the danger, as matters now stand, lies in the pulpits either quenching the prophetic fire of their preachers, or in their losing the higher prophetic minds altogether. With greater preaching, how much further the Churches could be got to advance! How much more light and life and air would be found within them!

I write all this because I believe I have been led astray myself in this matter. My instincts were for work. At the very outset these instincts were gratified. On completing my year of study at Manchester New College, I was invited to act as assistant minister to the Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, M.A., of Little Portland Street Chapel, London. My special work was to look after all the practical side of the church life—to visit the people, and to draw more closely together all the organised activities which had grown up around Mr. Wicksteed's ministry. I threw myself into this work with an enthusiasm quite beyond my strength, and developed the organisations beyond the strength of the congregation to maintain them.

I say, I have been led astray myself in this matter. And yet it all lay along the line of my development, just as did the return to Architecture. It was inevitable and necessary. For my own sake I regret nothing. None the less I am quite sure that all this work, and all that succeeded it until I broke down beneath the strain it brought, caused the arrest of my spiritual development; or probably it would be more true to say that it simply consolidated that development, while it did not allow it to grow any further. So far as I can see, my preaching days and my Labour Church days were not days of spiritual growth, but only of clearer practical insight. It was only when I was forced to retire to the Cheshire hills that my spiritual life seemed again to march forward. In the same way, when I had to leave the hills and come to London, my soul went to sleep; and it has only been during the past year of withdrawal that I have again been able to grow. In the hard work of preaching and public speaking I have always seemed to be repeating things over and over again which I had learned in seclusion and freedom; and I think it is the sense of everything in them being worn to death that has discouraged me so in looking through some of my old sermons. I have always felt sure that my repeated collapses of late years were serving some good purpose, but I have never seen that good purpose so clearly as I do now at the time of writing.

It is very probable that this is largely a physical matter, and that I have especially needed these alternations of enforced hard work, and of freedom to work as I could, to keep my progress even. At any rate I well know that the practical life, and the spiritual life which must inspire it, should grow up together, and that either divorced from the other is fatal to true personal or social development. But I think that, in the ministry, the difficulty of keeping the two going together should be more clearly recognised, and that, at every right cost, the spirit and power of prophecy should be cultivated as the highest form of ministry. It means, of course, the much higher and wider organisation of human effort, so that each man may be better able to follow his inward calling—the organisation of the division, and also of the interchange, of ministerial labour. In the Catholic Church this organisation appears to be carried well nigh to perfection. The Protestant Churches, in their reaction, became so very limited in their range of service, that little organisation was required.

Now that they, too, are extending their scope of operation, a wider scope of opportunity must follow.

Perhaps more than on the organisation of the ministry itself does this question of the prophetic life and energy bear upon the organisation of colleges to prepare men for the ministry. They need revolutionising from Schools of the Students to Schools of the Prophets. The practical and effective Man of God should be at the head of them. Scholarship by all means, and scholarly professors; but over all some personal incarnation of the union of God with Man. On this point we are far too diffident, especially those who revolt against the cheaper forms of orthodox religious teaching. If the religious life is a reality, the Prophet must be a reality also. It cannot otherwise be possible. I think our failure to recognise this fact is the fundamental cause of the failure of the Churches to lead the advance of Humanity. The difficulty is that the Prophet is unconventional and exacting, and makes people uncomfortable or angry, and never does quite the thing that is expected of him. It is probable, however, that these difficulties would no longer be a hindrance, if there were a better understanding of them, and of their meaning in the divine economy.

My real growth in London, and later in Manchester, lay in discovering the relation of my own religious life to the world around me, and in getting it to work in the world. It was this growth which led, at last, to the formation of the Labour Church in Manchester. The germs of it were all to be found in my life in the country; and I never lost the conviction that, for any social regeneration to become possible, a new religious awakening must be the soul of it—that the outer form of social organisation was worth absolutely nothing more than the soul of man could put into it. At the present moment I am convinced of this truth more deeply than ever, and more inclined than ever to throw all my efforts into working at the religious inside of the social problem, as against using them up in working at the political outside of it. I would still work at both if I could, but it is quite impossible; and I can acquiesce cheerfully in the impossibility, so long as this which I can still do is not denied me.

CHAPTER XXIV.

PREACHING IN LONDON.

I FIND from the sermons preached in London that my life in the country had given me a far greater confidence in the inward life as the interpreter of the outer, that I could see more clearly the relation of the religious life to social reform, that I felt that in our work of social reform we were truly fellow-workers with God, that I recognised the need of the Prophet as something greater and nearer to God than the Preacher, that I believed that a revival of religion in the Unitarian Churches was possible —not a revival of Unitarianism—that the bottom rock of all my preaching lay in the happiness and strength of my home life, and that all along I had the greatest hatred of the professionalism of the ministry—the title of Reverend, the gown, the white tie, and all that these things stand for.

From the notes of some of these sermons I will give a few extracts to indicate my position at this time. It was only very rarely that I read from MS.

THE INNER LIFE AND THE OUTER.

(*College Sermon, January 20th*, 1888.)

"The world's reformers may be divided roughly into two classes—those who seek to regenerate man from within, and those who endeavour to elevate him from without. Of these two classes, the Preacher and the Politician may be taken as suitable types. I am not going to attempt to decide here which of these has done most to benefit humanity. I believe that both are necessary.

"There was a time when, anxious to help in the world's forward work, yet with no religious basis on which to rest, I turned to Politics to compass the end I had in view. Two incidents in that period I recall now, from among many others,

all of which tended to make me profoundly dissatisfied with political work—work which endeavours to raise man by improving his external conditions.

"One was the sight of a fine row of newly built cottages, facing a beautiful tract of open country, and with a long line of hills at their rear. Occupied but a very short time, they were already fast becoming filthy in appearance, because of the slovenly character of the people who inhabited them. I sadly realised that a great deal had to be done for men and women besides putting them into better houses.

"The other incident was connected with a Socialist meeting in a poor part of London. At the end of his address the speaker told the hard-featured, grimy men before him, that they were slaves because they did not own the means of production; and he went on to tell his hearers that they had a right, and they ought, to seize the shipping and warehouses and wharfage of the Thames, and to work them on their own behalf. Looking round on the audience, I saw that, apart from any question of right, such a seizure would end in the most disastrous results, and most of all to the very men who were being urged thus to improve the condition of their lives.

"This appears to me to be the grand heresy of Socialism—the teaching that a man can be made better merely by being made more comfortable. . . . The saying that the Devil is a well-dressed gentleman seems to me a profound satire on those who strive only for improvement in the external conditions of living.

"But this is a question in which he who takes either extreme will find himself on the wrong path. How can families be brought up with fine moral sentiments where all sleep in one room? How can classes of people reach any high standard of life whose wages are not only miserably low, but—which is a still greater evil—terribly intermittent?

"Thus, though I myself have grown very dissatisfied with Politics, I fully recognise that there is a great work for politicians to carry out—if only they realise that they are working at but one side of the great problem. Man must have bread to live—'Man does not live by bread alone.' Here we have the obverse and reverse of the shield, and it is the latter truth that we are specially called to assert. . . .

"We are here, then, as Reformers of the Inner Life. What does this position which we have adopted suggest to us, but that we are called upon to be Prophets? When we realise what the Prophet has stood for, and must still stand for, does it not seem the height of egotism to dare to think of taking up a prophetic work? Yet I cannot escape the conclusion that we who propose to reform human life from within do stand before the world as Prophets, and have a prophetic mission to fulfil.

"And does such a conclusion tend to egotism? To me the thought that I am called to be a Prophet comes upon me with a crushing force. Like Jonah, I feel constrained to take ship for Tarshish. Egotism!—It is far more likely that if we come to realise the call made upon us, we shall shrink back from our work in despair.

"I know that God's Prophets appear where least expected. The world is always saying, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' It may be that God's highest Prophets of to-day will arise, are arising, from quarters where we should least expect them; it may be from quarters outside religious denominations altogether. Be that as it may, our duty is clear. We can only justify the position we have taken by being, each in his measure, Prophets of the Living God. . . .

"Religion is always revived by a deep mysterious working in the hearts of individual men. It has been so in other Churches; it must be so in the Unitarian Churches. And—another piece of egotism—we are the men from whom this revival of Religion must spring. If there be no such revival among the students and younger ministers of the Unitarian Churches, then they are doomed to decay, and the burden of a terrible responsibility will rest upon our shoulders.

"It has always been characteristic of Prophets that they speak to their fellows from a deep living experience of the facts of the religious life. No books, no traditional beliefs, avail the Prophet. He must live face to face with the facts of life—face to face with God. The power of the preacher is the power of the man, and the power of the man is the power of his Inner Life. . . .

"Well do I remember, when first I commenced preaching, being struck with this thought, that all the experiences of life—not of the outward life alone, but all the joys and sorrows, the temptations, the failures, the victories of the inner life—all could

be turned to account in the ministry. And when I was compelled to abandon the work, one thing that made me sadly feel the change was, that in the work I had to fall back upon, all these experiences could have no place. I could not build them into timber and iron, brick and stone. I longed for a sphere of work in which I could build them into the hearts of my fellow men.

"It is useful to know the world. It is well to have a knowledge of the ways of man with man. All experience of the outward world will be of great help to us in our work; but no revival of Religion will spring from that. It is in our conflicts with sin, in our wrestlings with doubt, in the fierce summer campaigns of the soul, in the harder wintry seasons that follow, that we must find our message from God to man. . . . It is to this Inner Life that Religion owes everything, from it that all Bibles and all beliefs have sprung; and from it alone can the Bibles, the beliefs, the Religion of our own age spring.

"This ideal of what we should be in our ministry is so high that it suggests despair. How pure, how holy, how true we ought to be, if we are to fulfil our prophetic mission on earth! As I realise this, it seems as if God's withering glance were piercing to the depths of his would-be servants; and I can understand well how those old Prophets, to whom God was so real, felt scorched, burned up, in the Awful Presence. Well has Thomas Binney expressed what all must have felt who have devoted themselves to this high service of God:—

Eternal Light! Eternal Light!
How pure that soul must be,
When, placed within thy searching sight,
It shrinks not, but with calm delight,
Can live and look on thee!

* * * * *

"We cannot commend ourselves to our fellow men by the cut of our coats. The age in which we live is too earnest, too realistic, for that. . . . It will be by calling out the inner faculties of others, by helping them in the development of their own Inner Life, that we shall justify our mission to men. We shall have to deal largely with doubters; with those who seek God, and find him not. What can we do with such, but throw them back upon themselves, upon the moral nature within, and say to them, 'There, or nowhere, is God!' We have to help them to realise

their own Inner Life, to develop it, to work up, and up, and up from it, till at last they grasp something of what God is in their own inmost being, and in the whole Universe of being around them."

The Religion of Here and Now.

(*April 15th*, 1888.)

"As our lives are lived in the present, so most of our inspiration should come from the present. Many a man gets muddled and perplexed because he is taught to find his religion within the covers of an ancient book. If such a man could grasp the idea that Religion is to be found in life, in the life of his own country, the life of his own times, the life of his own home, above all in his own individual life, he might find that he was really a religious man, though he had not known it. . . . I would say to you, Think over the events of your own life, all the good and the evil there have been in it, all your struggles, your failures, your successes, all your love for others, all their love for you. Ask yourself, 'What have I learned from all this? What have all these experiences taught me? How have they taught me to *live*?' Your real answer to these questions will be your real religion before God. And I would urge you to stand by this answer, always making it larger as life grows larger, deeper as experience and insight deepen, but always standing hard by your answer at any given time. That which you have learned from life to live by, that is your religion."

Fellow Workers with God.

(*College Sermon, May 18th*, 1888.)

"We hear much of the unity of Christendom. This conception of being fellow workers with God raises us to a height from which even the unity of Christendom appears a petty, sectarian thing. It is no more than the unity of one regiment of the mighty army fighting for right against wrong—the mighty army of God. We must rise far higher than that if we would grasp this conception aright. . . .

"There was a time, not long ago, when man did not understand his right relationship with Nature. He feared her, trembled before her, and saw in her mysterious forces of evil which did

not exist. Now man regards himself as a comrade of the great Nature Forces. He even employs them in his service. He has learned to master Nature by knowledge and obedience, and so to conquer more and more the physical conditions of his life.

"In some such way must man learn to revise his notions of God. As he has risen to regard himself as a Nature Power, so must he rise to the conception that he is a God Power, holding his own place in the Universe, and yet allied by closest affinities with both Nature and God. In both the physical and the spiritual world he will learn that the power and freedom of his manhood lie in the mastery of obedience. As he already stands and labours side by side with Nature, so must he learn to stand and labour side by side with God. . . . This, I believe, will be the highest reward for the work to which we go forth—that in it we shall find a field of action whereon God and man meet."

God and the Home.

(*January 1st*, 1889.)

"It is not only that Home gives us noble ideals of ourselves, of Humanity, of God. It brings us into the presence of the deep and eternal Reality of existence, the everlasting rock on which our life is built up. There is a wonderful little poem of Clough's which powerfully reveals this real element in our home relations.

When the dews are earliest falling,
When the evening glen is grey,
Ere thou lookest, ere thou speakest,
My beloved,
I depart, and I return to thee—
Return, return, return.

Dost thou watch me while I traverse
Haunts of men beneath the sun—
Dost thou list while I bespeak them
With a voice whose cheer is thine?
O my brothers! men, my brothers,
You are mine and I am yours;
I am yours to cheer and succour,
I am yours for hope and aid:
Lo my hand to raise and stay you,
Lo, my arm to guard and keep,
My voice to rouse and warn you,

And my heart to warm and calm:
My heart to lend the life it owes
To her that is not here,
In the power of her that dwelleth
Where you know not—no, nor guess not—
Whom you see not; unto whom—
Ere the evening star hath sunken,
Ere the glow-worm lights its lamp,
Ere the wearied workman slumbers—
I return, return, return.

"Grand as this is, it is no merely ideal picture. It is a picture of real life, realised life, life which is being lived amongst us day by day. But we seldom think of the glory of it; and then inadequately, as people in a dream. Yet it is here, in this world of ours; and to me one of the brightest intimations of God's presence with man, making faith in him a deep spiritual necessity.

"When we speak of God as the home of the soul, we have in mind, doubtless, the thought of man going out from his home in the morning and returning to it at night. So we think of man as coming from God at his birth and going again to him when his earthly life is done. Clough's poem suggests this idea also, but it takes us still nearer the truth than that. It is not only that from God we come and to God we return, but also that in him we really live. He is the real existence in whom we ever *are*. It is our existence in God which makes our being real. The rest is all life's show and circumstance. This is life itself. . . .

"I have read works of Philosophy, hoping to find God so; but I found him not—only hints and suggestions that he might be found, if only I could tell how and where. Now I have come to see that here or nowhere is God—here, in the sacredness of human love, in the mystery of human communion, in the deep underlying reality of a shared life. For it is true, in more senses than one, that what we share we are; that what we live in others, and what they live in us, is our real being; and that God is the permanent Reality which makes possible this giving and taking of life. This is the fellowship which we have one with another; this is the fellowship which we have with God. . . .

"Jesus was a greater realist than Zola. He took a little child, and set him in the midst of his disciples, and then he took the little child in his arms, and thus pressed to his bosom some-

thing of the deep reality of life, and made his dull disciples understand something of that reality too. Zola has never dreamed of such intense realism as that. Emerson, too, was a greater realist than he, when he wrote to Carlyle of his year-old boy as 'a little bud of God.'

"'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork'; but surely the stars do not speak to us so persuasively of him as our homes do. We talk of worshipping God in the cathedral of Nature whose vast vault is the sky; but surely it is in the more sacred shrine of our own homes that we enter most closely into communion with the Father of our spirits. We study Philosophy in the hope of finding that beneath the fleeting show of life there is a Reality which abides; but surely the truest Philosopher is he who best understands the Reality revealed to him at home. We read our Bibles, and study the Religions of the world, trying to touch the fringe of God's garment so; but in our home life is our truest Bible, our sacred book, our story of God's life on earth with man."

Immortality and the Springtide.

(*April 21st*, 1889.)

"To return to the Springtide, and its hints of a renewal of life beyond the grave. Because trees deck themselves with leaf and flower after their winter's sleep, are we to argue that, therefore, man is immortal? It is needless to say that all through Nature there is absolutely no proof of the doctrine that man shall live through the eternal years of God. Yet the Springtide gladdens us, and fills us with hope, and we feel nearer to the heart of God than at any other season of the year. How is this? In a despondent mood, indeed, it may well be that even Spring should suggest death and destruction. Sitting at the foot of a black poplar, for instance, we see the ground far around us crimsoned over with multitudes of flowers, fallen only to decay. Even if their red pollen have first fructified some germ of another tree, it is probable that not one seed so formed shall ever be sufficiently favoured as to grow up into a tree. Thus the Spring suggests to us the waste as well as the profusion of life; and yet for most of us it makes our hearts glad with hope. How is this?

"It is that, amidst all this renewal of life, we discern but a

passing show; that thought compels us to seek an eternal element of which this show is but the ever changing surface; and that man himself, the thinker, shares, not only in the varying scene, but also in the eternal element which underlies it, and makes it possible. When we understand this, then the exuberance and waste of life around us, by their very antithesis, set us musing on eternity, and on our own eternity. And so the beautiful profusion of Spring makes us glad, because we feel that God is about us, working in the laboratory of Nature, thus stimulating us into action who share in his own being. Only can we truly feel at home with Nature when we feel at home with God; only in real love with Nature when we are in love with God.

"Above all, the scenes of Nature can only have real meaning and helpfulness for us as they stand for physical types, not merely of spiritual experience, but of our own spiritual experience. Thus the renewal of life in a tree can have little significance for us—it can appeal only to our artistic and not to our spiritual nature—save as we have had our own inner life renewed from time to time, and have thus gained hints of a Power which is always equal to such spiritual as well as physical regeneration. So far as we have awakened to righteousness, so far as our own souls have really lived, so far as from our periods of moral slumber we have been aroused to newness of life, just so far will the bursting life of the Spring bring us into fellowship with the Eternal Life, the Father of our spirits, and teach us to wait in confidence on him through whom we are. Otherwise this glad season may seem beautiful as a love-letter—but with the pathetic beauty of a love-letter not written to us. Nature, like music, takes up and intensifies our moods. What we are, that Nature is to us. It sings us our own song, it tells us the message that we bring, it carols the gladness of our own hearts, or it utters the wail of our own despair.

"And so this show of life, if it is to mean anything real to us, if it is to enter into our religious life, demands an exegesis infinitely more difficult and delicate than that which is taught the youthful student preparing for the ministry—an exegesis whose importance makes that other shrink into all but absolute insignificance. Life is a vast mirror in which we see what we are.

"Then all interpretations of life must be false!—Not so; but rather this solemn truth, which it is for us deeply to ponder.

The truer the man, the truer the meaning he finds in life. Here is the bitterest curse of our ignorance, our weakness, our folly, our sin, that they blind our eyes, and dull our sense for apprehending the real meaning of things.

"For this reason the preaching of the doctrine of Immortality is a matter of comparative indifference to me. I may be preaching it to one whose own life gives him no warrant for believing in it. Sadder still, for me; I may, myself, have no right to believe in it. I may tell you my hopes; but does my spiritual condition justify them? Does yours justify you in sharing them? Under any circumstances they can only spring out of our own inner life.

"The great interpreters of Nature, those alone who can be of any real help to us, are those who looked on life for themselves, at first hand, those who had a strong inner life of their own to guide and sustain them in their search for truth. And it is only as we share their inwardness, their independence, their personality, that they can truly help us. To be of real service, they must be to us travelling companions rather than guides, comrades rather than masters, friends rather than teachers. The attitude of discipleship is fatal to us, and also does them wrong. We call such men Seers, and so they are; but we can see no vision through their eyes. They may point us where to look, and tell us what they see; but we must behold for ourselves, and can live only on what we behold. . . .

"Every revelation of God is personal and private; it cannot be communicated at second hand. Others may try to show us where they have found the water of life, but they cannot draw for us. The way in which some people choose their religion reminds me of a self-made man who was suddenly raised to the mayoralty of a large provincial town. He sent to London for patterns of coats of arms, from which to select one to adorn his carriage; not understanding that but one coat of arms, if any, was possible for him, namely, his own. It is thus with our religion also. . . .

"I think we cannot too strongly insist that the only alternative to accepting our beliefs upon authority lies in that enjoyment of an original relation to the universe of which Emerson speaks. Our attitude must be either that of those who gaze into the vacated tomb, and return full of the joy of immortal hope; or of those who look abroad on Nature, and interpret all they see from the experiences of their own hearts, and the determinations

of their own thoughts, always understanding that, no more in Religion than in Science, can man ever know all, but that he can ever be learning more. But if we accept this latter alternative, what a burden of responsibility it brings! We need no longer charge our consciences with accepting as true documents which wise men tell us are of very doubtful authenticity. We may be able to read weighty reasons for concluding that Jesus never preached the Sermon on the Mount or uttered the Lord's Prayer, without any thought that such conclusions have any relation to our religious life. But though we no longer lie under the very heavy responsibility of taking our religion from a book, and of demanding that others shall do likewise, we lie under a burden of obligation still harder to bear, namely, that of making our own lives and consciences so true that they shall be the means of giving us an interpretation of life, not absolutely true, but on the lines of truth, and of progress towards higher knowledge.

"There are times when such a responsibility seems to me appalling, overwhelming, especially when I regard my position among you here. Do you wonder that, when I recognise how my own version of life's meaning may be marred by my own weakness, I shrink from preaching doctrines and conclusions, and take refuge in insisting upon methods rather than beliefs, and above all upon the individual responsibility of each of us to develop his own best life? When I remind you of all the beauties of the Spring, when I recall scenes in which I have renewed my own life through the renewal of the life of Earth, when I tell you of the memories of the meanings which those scenes had for me, and how they still inspire my life, I cannot forget that my own version of them has been both made and marred by the character of my own inner life—made by every successful struggle with weakness, marred by every fall into sin; and that, but for constant and repeated failures in the development of inward strength, not only my preaching, but my whole life, might be more blessed in power for good, as well as my apprehension of truth more in accordance with the reality of things. For I know that the joy that the Springtide brings to me is feeble and inconstant compared with that which a stronger nature would feel, and that the faith in God and Immortality which it suggests to me is poor and ineffectual compared with what it would be were I myself more faithful.

"This is the burden of responsibility which the enjoyment of an original relation to the universe lays upon us. But what a spur and incentive to life, too! Springtide meaningless to us unless we find its meaning in our own hearts! No hint of immortality there unless we ourselves have begun to live the immortal life! Our dear Mother Earth, even when decking herself afresh with her bright new robes, not felt to be 'godlike and my Father's,' unless we find the Eternal Spirit of life to be the Father of our own spirit also!

"But, on the other hand, what magnificent possibilities of life such a view of Religion opens out to us! What infinite room for expansion! What a splendid continent for conquest! What reward, too, for all the struggles of life successfully passed through, that the result of each is a more abundant entrance into fellowship and communion with God! This is no vague or vain dream. The men who have conquered themselves have been they who have conquered life. The men who have been great in their own hearts have been they who have brought a message of comfort and cheer to their fellows. The men who have ever fought their way forward, against difficulty without and weakness within, are they who have given a new significance to our earthly life, and have helped the world so much nearer to God. For this individual view of Religion does not mean that we can do nothing for our fellow men, and that they can do nothing for us. Though we may not adopt another's conclusions, we may and must help each other to live. This is what our public worship means, what all our intercourse with each other means, what all our work for the world means. We are helping each other to live; and life is the interpreter of Life."

CHAPTER XXV.

MANCHESTER MINISTRY.

It was in November, 1888, that my work at Little Portland Street Chapel commenced; and in June, 1890, that I became minister at Upper Brook Street Free Church, Manchester. When I received the latter appointment, I realised at once that the opportunity of my life had come; and that if I could not find my work in Manchester, there would be the end of all my dreams.

I have said already that preaching and working hindered rather than helped the growth of my spiritual life; while, on the other hand, my eyes were being opened to the necessary relation between Politics and Religion. In this I was undoubtedly helped beyond my knowledge by such intercourse as I enjoyed with Mr. Wicksteed. This intercourse did not amount to much, for he left me absolutely free in the conduct of my work, and when we did meet we usually had a deal of "shop" to talk over. But he is too full a man for even shop talk not to let out something; and in himself he embodied a very deep and strong religious life and insight, together with the grip of a specialist on economic problems.

I cannot say how deeply indebted I am to this man who, since first we met, has remained my constant friend and helper. I have so many causes to feel grateful to him—perhaps this the chief—that, from the first, he understood what I meant by the Labour Church. Long before any one else understood, the knowledge of his sympathy with my work cheered and sustained me through many a dark hour. Indeed, I have often said that he knew more of the meaning of my work than I myself did; and with the new insight I have gained of late into the real nature of what I have been doing, I can see that I spoke truly. Only those can realise the value of such sympathy who have faced the world alone with a new thought, evolved, not by

scientific, but by spiritual methods—a thought to be fully verified to the world only in some distant future. When, in times of trouble, perplexity and loneliness, I have wondered whether I was but a fool and a crank to stick to my idea, the knowledge that Philip Wicksteed believed in it has saved me from falling into the dungeon of Doubting Castle.

My acceptance of Socialism, as the great constructive principle of future industrial and social development, was of slow growth. Naturally I recognised the one-sidedness of the Socialist gospel, and this was a great hindrance to me. It was really only when, in Manchester, I came into touch, not merely with Socialist theory, but with the life of the Socialist movement, that I began to see its significance more clearly. Meanwhile I was simply drifting into it from extreme aversion to the results of Individualism, and the hopelessness of finding any remedy for them by Individualist methods. In London these results were appallingly apparent, including the degradation incurred by the successful person. I realised fully that Society was in a state of chaos; just held together by its old clothes, liable to burst into shreds at any crisis; and that only a new life could save it. It was because I found the beginning of this new life among the Socialists, that I have since identified myself with them. Before leaving London I said to Mr. Wicksteed, "Can you say anything to stop me from being a Socialist?" He answered, "No; I'm afraid I can't." And my reply was, "I'm gone then." It must not, however, be inferred from this that Mr. Wicksteed is a Socialist. Certainly he would not accept the name without considerable qualification.

My work in London was chiefly connected with the organisation of Clubs for young people. I saw a good deal of similar work in other parts of London. But by the time I went to Manchester I had concluded that, in face of the real problem, all such work was useless. It was inspired by no revolutionary principle. It was really a conservative force. To seek to elevate the masses by contact with the classes, apart from the inculcation of some revolutionary principle, appears to me as sensible as to seek to reform a boy by sending him to herd with criminals. The vice of all the work of superior people is, that they wish to make the working man what they themselves are. Personally, I like the working man better as he is. The real value of such work is its value to the superior person.

I went to Manchester with another deep feeling—that of the frightful gulf between the Churches and the World, and of the helplessness of the Churches in facing the World's problems. I already had the instinct developed, half unconsciously, that the World was vastly greater than all the Churches in it. Indeed, the Churches seemed to make a very small show indeed compared with what the World outside was doing. My ideal in going to Manchester was the very ambitious one of building up a Church somewhat equal to the occasion. It was very foolish, but not wholly discreditable. I had not the ability to do it, not to name other limitations. What a Church asks of its minister is to be sent home to eat its dinner in peace and quietness. For Sunday is a day of rest, and of forgetfulness of all one's labours; and a good deal may be said on behalf of this hygienic religious influence. But what I wanted of those hard-worked Manchester people who asked me to preach to them was, that they should not be able any longer to eat their Sunday dinner in peace and quietness, but with severe self-questionings as to their right to have any dinner at all in a city of such hideous squalor.

In this matter I had been misled somewhat by memories of my orthodox days. Then the popular preacher was the man who would make people think most of their sins; and I thought that, human nature being the same everywhere, I might safely follow his example. But I forgot a few things in drawing this conclusion. The sins were of a very different character, and I could point to no easy way of escape from them. Indeed, I had the worst vice of a preacher. I sent the people home perplexed and uncomfortable. One of my hearers, a large employer of labour, once said to me, "Your predecessor always made me feel satisfied with my life and work; you never do."

Besides, I was a poor preacher. I was not physically strong enough to reproduce in the pulpit the deep feelings of the study. The preparation of my sermons cost me too much for me to be able to deliver them freely. It used me up completely. I overworked myself, too, and slept badly. I never had the faculty of adjusting my burden to my strength. A stronger man might have said all that I said, and yet have given satisfaction; for eloquence alone has a tendency to mesmerise people, if used to that end by a master. Also, beside my social heresies, I was getting quite hopeless about Unitarianism developing into

anything better. Its deadness weighed upon me—its utter powerlessness to appeal to the people, and to become a force in their awakening and emancipation. Though I could not call myself a Unitarian, yet I felt my own religious convictions implicated in the Unitarian situation. Was the advance that I advocated towards freedom and natural development simply another step towards the extinction of religious enthusiasm and popular fervour? Was I doomed to work on in an ever narrowing circle, content to know that I was too wise for the people to understand me, that I had reached too near the truth for the crowd to appreciate my message? Where I had seen any "advanced" Unitarianism, it seemed to me to differ little from Secularism, and really to have taken the final step towards extinction. Every way I was worried, and the more so that I was in so responsible a position, and had in hand so great an opportunity.

Moreover, I was wrought up by an accident. Not long before going to Manchester, I was kept in bed for nearly a month by a badly sprained knee, which left me lame for nearly a year after. My wages were not stopped, friends called to see me, grapes and other delicacies followed—and while in bed I read the final Report of the Sweating Commission. The whole thing burned me. I vowed that on my first Sunday in Manchester I would preach on this terrible Report—in Manchester, which had given its name to all that I was politically opposed to. But I was not clever enough. One cannot be everything. And I was already worn out with my work in London, and my lame knee kept me from calling on the people. Doubtless, too, I suffered from swelled head as well as swollen heart. I am very, very sorry about it all—for the Church's sake. For myself, it was indeed my opportunity. And that is how it has always been as between myself and Unitarianism.

This period was one of deep domestic trouble also. Two more boys had been born in London, and the youngest of them was slowly dying. From three months old he fell off, and died when we had been nearly a year in Manchester. When the end came, we knew the sorrow of being thankful that the little one had left us. From this lingering death, and all its associations, my wife never recovered her spirits.

It was a restless unhappy time, only lived through by hard work. What strikes me most as I look back on it is the amount

of impudence which it needs to get things in this world made better, and just now the thought that this impudence was forthcoming depresses me. Is there not sorrow enough in the world, without our adding to it by the disturbances we make with our discontent? Is there not goodness enough in the world, but we must set ourselves to upset people and institutions to make them better? Why could not I at Manchester have taken things more good naturedly, and with more common-sense? Why could not I have devoted my time and strength to building up the personal life of the good people around me, and to making my own home more happy? What fate is it that makes some of us so uncomfortable to live with and work with; and, by burdening us with ideas, makes us such a burden to those who look to us for support and comfort? Is it not possible to reform the world without all this sacrifice of peace and happiness?

No. There is no other way. All we can do is to make the burden we impose on others as light as possible, and to cheer them as much as possible. But who that is absorbed in an idea does this? Who that feels the burden of injustice and oppression and wrong in the world can be just to all the goodness and helpfulness there are around him, and can give his life to his home as others may? From morning to night I worked, on and on and on, sometimes far into the night, because I had the frenzy in me to make the world better; because I had a Church about me which I wanted to be a great living power for religious and social reformation. How clumsy and bungling and heartless it all seems now as I look back upon it! But I visited the police courts, and the common lodging houses in Angel Meadow, and how could I help myself? Even the lives of the women who came to do our washing were so appallingly wretched, that I felt I could not bear the love of my own home if I did not do all in my power to remove the causes of such helpless misery. But I often think that we who feel called of God to attempt some great work in the world are not so near to him as the strong and patient souls of the wives who make the burden of our work bearable—as if we were men with blood on our hands, and blood-guiltiness in our hearts—and then I envy those who can say,

> The daily round, the common task,
> Can furnish all I need to ask;
> Room to deny myself, a road
> To lead me nearer to my God.

It is in such lives that the steadfast beauty of human life is seen, rather than in the lives of those who rush forward to do the rough work of the world. In them there is the quiet pose, the strong completeness, the struggle concealed by patience, which makes of them a mighty work of art, an interpretation of the Infinite Quiet which lives at the heart of this stormy whirl of being. The slight records which remain of this time reveal to me how much my wife bore silently while I was bustling around with my work. As it all comes home to me, I feel as though I could not dare to meet her again in a life more real and deep than this. Womanhood! Wifehood! Motherhood! The mystery of the abandonment of self-realisation, and therein coming nearest to the realisation and the revelation of God!

I cannot bear to dwell on the memories of those days, and yet I cannot bear to leave them in order to tell of the brooding in my own mind which led to the birth of the Labour Church. It seems almost a desecration to change the subject. And yet I cannot say what I want to say about it. As before some great work of Art, or some vast scene of Nature, I wish to linger, and gaze, and dream deep into the Infinite Soul of Life. Woman's love, woman's patience, woman's strength, woman's life—all given, given, given! My own life still impossible, save as it is cradled in a woman's love!

I know there are those who think woman's life wasted when given to man so. But they forget God. His being there makes all the difference. Reckoning with him, self-realisation is not a means but an end—the means, giving ourselves away—the man no less than the woman, though each differently, it may be. But all doctrines on this question are hopelessly inadequate—the new no less than the old. My wife and I often discussed them, but never with any result beyond this—that we were glad we were married. For the world, we could discover no rule to guide it.

We are on an ocean where the waves cross and re-cross, and shift and change with every changing gale. In fair weather we look down deep into the glorious blue, and dream of hiding-places of beauty and repose, and palace caves of eternal joy and calm. But we are built to cross the ocean. If the wind lulls and goes to sleep, and we are rocked by the smooth billows without making any way, we grow impatient with our craft, and

fill her with engines and boilers and furnaces, and force her through storm and calm to the haven where we would be. There are no rules—no rules—only endless difficulties, endless energy to meet them, and God within all. When we have got our newest theories to work, it will still be the same—difficulty, bewilderment, courage, peace; and nothing ever for long, because we cannot choose but grow.

Just now these memories rise like blinding spray, falling deadly cold; but I hear no order to slow up. We are very great. It is the God in us that fills me with these discontents, and that ere long will let me join again in the laughter of the gods. For man can only express the infinity in his finite nature by being everything in turns. To allow himself to be bound by his finity to a rigid consistency, is to lower himself to a conventional person or a crank. Let us live with the gods in the open, and laugh with them, and weep.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LABOUR CHURCH.

I FELT that the four walls of that Church in Manchester were like the four walls of a grave, and the roof like the earth above; but I had no sense of daisies and lesser celandines springing in humble loveliness from the turf. Like Christianity in my earlier days, so now this Church was a prison to my soul; and I felt it to be a prison to all the souls in it, though they did not. I said on my first Sunday, "We must get outside these four walls." I still believed that the tomb might open, and the dead come forth. It was I who had to come forth. But if one could really raise a Church to life, to go forth unitedly into the world of men and women with all its cerements shed; to maintain itself, firm and solid as a rock, in the midst of the rushing river of human woe; to stand, as it ought to stand, on man's side and on God's side against every form of wrong; to think, and learn, and work, and love its way through every difficulty that man puts in the way of man——!

It was a vain dream. I asked my friend Wicksteed the other day why Wordsworth never completed his great poetic work. I had thought that perhaps his apparent loss of that insight which he had at the time of the outbreak of the French Revolution was the reason—that he had missed his way through the rivers of blood that flowed from that source—and so the virtue went out of him which he had when he projected that great Poem foreshadowed in the magnificent fragment of the RECLUSE. Why had he never completed his life task? Wicksteed replied, "Because he was not man enough." And that was why I had to leave Upper Brook Street Free Church—the reason that I must accept for myself, whatever reasons other people may choose to give.

For one thing, I had not yet found what I was seeking—the

way to take my subjective religion into the great life of the world. I had not yet seen that what I sought was simply to repeat the old mistake of the Churches over again. I had not learned that what I needed was to discover the subjective religion of the world itself—the *real* religion of the world, as distinguished from the one talked about—the sub-conscious religion, which my conscious religious life must help towards self-consciousness. Indeed, it is only to-day that I can see what I was driving at, and what all my work has meant.

A friend once described me as a man of the study, but he was wrong. Circumstances compel me to do my work in a study; but it is not here that I have learned the world's needs, but in the world itself. The man of the study never does a thing which he does not know all about. I have acted, and am now thrown into oblivion for a time that I may learn the meaning of what I did. Books have their place; but if I had learned chiefly from books, or built up my ideals in the study, and tried to apply them to life itself, then I should never have found myself in the world's swirling current, almost washed away. To the man who lives, his study is not his school but his workshop. It is important that this should be understood. But I am not saying that his study walls should not be lined with books.

And I can further see to-day that my subjective religious life was not strong enough, not yet sufficiently conscious of itself, to do the work I had laid out for it. Had it been otherwise, I should not have had so restless a time, and my spiritual life would not have been arrested by preaching and work as it was. It was not a retrogression, however. In the quest on which I was now set, I lost nothing that I had previously gained, but I did not keep up my proficiency by practice, through being preoccupied with other things. It happened to me as to one who is learning to skate, and who has not gained proficiency because the frosts have not lasted long enough. Yet, when winter returns, the learner finds he has lost nothing by the long intervention of other activities. He begins again where last winter he left off.

This fact in the religious life is one worth considering, because it illustrates what I am always insisting on—that Religion is an Art in the first place. An art is never forgotton by disuse. A man can never forget how to walk, or skate, or swim, or ride a

bicycle. He can never forget how to dig, or plough, or mow, or drive a horse. He can never forget how to wield a hammer, or a chisel, or a brush. I have sometimes done no drawing whatever for a long period, and yet, on returning to it, have found that I could manage the pencil or brush somewhat better than when I used them last. I had forgotten nothing; but, on the other hand, had gained something which made me more the master of my tools.

Of course, in returning to an art, there is a certain stiffness or weakness of muscle to overcome, the result of long disuse; but there is no such thing as having to learn an art twice, once it has been fairly mastered. I cannot imagine a man, who had learned to swim as a boy, ever going into the water wondering whether he would be able to swim, even though he had not swum for twenty or thirty years. Directly he got into the water he would have the swim-feeling all over him, and would spontaneously throw himself forward and strike out. Of course he would soon tire, and have to rest; but he would swim with the same confidence and the same stroke as when he was a boy so many years back.

An art, once acquired, becomes part of the man—mental and physical. It cannot be forgotten as knowledge can. You cannot forget what you can do, as you can forget what you know. And so it is in the religious life, when once you dare to learn how to live from life itself. Base your religion on a book, and the book may be upset, and your religion go with it, at any rate for a long time. Determine that you will base your religion on your own experiences—which means that you will guide your life day by day by your own conclusions—and whatever art of living you acquire you will never lose. Circumstances may hinder you from practising it, your own folly and sin may hinder you, too; but what you have once really acquired has become part of what you are. The man who has once swum knows all over him that he could swim if he jumped into the water. The man who has once lived in real communion with God equally well knows all over him that, however he may have shut the door of that communion, it is there for him to enter upon again when he wills, or when he can. For I have lately learned that there are physical conditions under which real communion with God is impossible, while knowledge of the reality of it and confidence in the renewal

of it still remain. Such is the abiding reality of a spiritual life that has really been made one's own.

I have dwelt on this subject here, because it gives some answer to a question which used to trouble me in my days of doubt. I used to wonder how it was possible for a man to have any permanent "assurance of faith," without the enlightenment and support of a special divine revelation. I find that provision is made for that in the way in which we are built—that anything which we have practised into self-consciousness is never really lost. I cannot imagine that the time will ever come, whatever my preoccupations meanwhile, or whatever my folly or sin, when I shall be able to look myself or the universe steadfastly in the face, and not realise that I stand in the presence and am supported by the power of God. On the bosom of the Eternal Sea of Life I know that I can cast myself, without the least thought of being lost in its depths. All of which is becoming clearer to me even as I am writing this.

And now, as I look back to this time in Manchester, it appears to me that, when our life with God does become quite real, we need not trouble much about its constant presence in self-consciousness. It was necessary that I should discover the relation between my own inner life and the inner life of the world, and it was worth resting on my attainments in self-consciousness to develop the beginnings of a world-consciousness, each of which would, in time, act and react on the other. As to what I have called my spiritual life, I see now that God was making ample provision for its further growth.

And there is another thing that I have seen of late. In the earlier part of this story I have shown clearly that I went through a great deal of struggle and strife to find my way to God. In noting how frequently the word "struggle" crops up in my sermons, I have been at times almost amused, and at other times have wondered whether I was not now going back from all that into a lower form of life.

Some few years since I began to learn, in a measure, that struggling was not living, so much as learning to live. I now see that real living is only attained in so far as we have learned to confidently abandon ourselves to life, as the trained artist abandons himself to his art. The swimmer does not struggle to swim, or the skater to skate, or the painter to paint. The beginner does

that; but the time comes when, in the sense in which I mean, the days of struggling are over, and boldness and freedom grow. It is so in any real religious life. The day comes when we live most truly by abandonment rather than by struggle, when our freest and most fearless moments are our highest and best, and when want of confidence in abandonment would mean a falling back into the lower struggling life, and a failure to discover new possibilities of living, by the revelation of which we might clear our own vision and help our fellow men.

From this point of view it seems to me that in Manchester I was simply trusting the spiritual life I had reached through many struggles, and that my struggles then had to go to finding a more definite place for Religion in the arena of affairs. What I had gained for myself could only grow larger, for myself, even, by taking it out to find its place and its work in the great world. It is not that all the desperate wrestling was unnecessary. This is the error of the purely Pagan view of life—or what we conventionally call the Pagan view. We dream of doing things easily and naturally as the great artist wields his brush. Our danger is in mistaking the end for the means. It is the danger of all doctrines of Freedom—Antinomian, Pagan or Anarchist. In every art, freedom can only be gained by hard work and discipline. The inspiration of the artist makes the hard work bearable and fruitful. It is so with the Art of Life. Freedom is an inward possession, the secret of which must be earned and learned by wrestling with Fate.

In our religious life, we struggle with the mysteries and difficulties which beset our God-ward path. Then, when we have found God, life becomes simply an act of confident giving up to the inward Will at whatever cost. What wrestling there may be in this life will be of a different type—as that of Jesus at Gethsemane. For the Art of Living with God is no Art for Art's sake, but Art consecrated to a purpose which, in this life, may bring tragic results—from the world's standpoint. If an artist to-day, who had worked hard until he could safely abandon himself to his Art, were also to abandon himself to God, it is conceivable that his pictures would not sell—if, indeed, God allowed him to continue that work. Jesus learned his Art among the lovely hills of Galilee, where the birds sang, and the flowers bloomed, and the people lived simple lives. His religion

had all the freedom and careless ease of a summer's day. Then God took him to Jerusalem. Jesus remained master of the Art he had learned—the Art of Living with God—but the noonday summer's sun of Galilee set in blood on Calvary.

This was no Art for Art's sake. And I can see now the answer to many questionings I have had of late about my own condition. It has seemed to me that, with all my confidence in God, life ought to be an easy thing; and indeed, so far as my own inner life goes, I find in it an ease and confidence that I have never known before. Why, then, is not my work easy too? Why all these difficulties and anxieties which have gone near to killing me, or worse than killing me? If I really lived with God, would not my life be strong and glad all through, as that of Nature in Spring or of Jesus in Galilee? In hours of deep depression, when all I could do was to bear, I have felt that my whole religious life was challenged, and that if I really had any true life with God, I ought to be able to rouse myself. As the Jews mocked Jesus, so have I mocked myself.—If you think yourself God's, rise up out of that!

I have also thought, at times, that, having given myself to God and the People, God ought not to let me suffer so. And then I have remembered that God let Jesus pass through Gethsemane to the Cross. And it has seemed all a dark mystery, with no outlook; all I could do being to sit in the darkness and wait, while trouble and difficulty refused to wait.

I see it now. The Art of Living with God is Art with a Purpose. In the country I had learned the Art. In Manchester I learned the Purpose. Then these years of ever increasing difficulty began, my way now at last seeming nearly closed up, and I only able to write this as a forlorn hope, on the strength of a physician's poisonous drugs.

I see it, but I do not in the least understand it. It is part of the whole mystery of Evil, and of the "Education of God," which we must accept and live by along with the other facts of life. No doctrine can be wormed out of it. Nor Church nor Priest can base any claim upon it. It is a fact which we must simply accept as a fact, if we would be always living in constant newness of life. So far as you doctrinise the fact you fossilise it, and this is one of those living facts which God has not yet done with.

I have dreamed the Pagan dream. Year by year I have found my life growing up from bondage to inward freedom. Indeed, when first I thought of writing this story, FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM was the title I thought of giving to it. It is part of the truth, and a part which will again inspire me when this cloud is overpast. I am not bound as I once was. I do not struggle as I once did. In abandonment I have found repose and strength, and at times the very presence of God when I was least thinking of him. That has only happened in Galilee. In Jerusalem I have not found God *so*. Galilee and Jerusalem—Paganism and Christianity—this life of ours streaked with dualism all through—as though with flowers and blood, the song of birds and the death cry of a mighty spirit. Life is a Mission, as Mazzini has told us. Life and song, sunshine and laughter, freedom and confidence—and then the Mission, seeming to come as fire from Heaven, to scorch it all up—a sacrifice to God and the People, if we will to make it so.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW THE IDEA CAME

I INTENDED to write about the Labour Church in the last chapter. Perhaps I shall be more successful here. The difficulty is that, as I write now, thoughts grow out of the memories of the past, and light falls across them, and I see more of the meaning of things than ever I did before.

I was not satisfied with a sentimental religion, a personal religion, a religion that saved the individual from the world. I wanted a religion that would place a man and a Church side by side with God, as fellow workers with him in unfolding the progressive life of Humanity. That is what I meant by wanting that Church to be a power in Manchester, and to take its rightful place in the revolution of civic affairs.

I was not going to try Clubs again, and the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon seemed altogether too funny—indeed, something worse than funny, after a visit to Angel Meadow or the Police Courts. It appeared to me that the Churches were making game of God and the Poor. I learned what I could of what others were doing, joining in where there was any opportunity of real usefulness. But they all seemed fooling with the great Social Cancer—or practising their virtues on it.

In this rooting about I came across a small group of Anarchists, organised as a branch of the Socialist League. One of these was a remarkable man—Anarchist, Communist, Revolutionist, Atheist, and of course very poor. But he was a man of great ability, and a real student by nature. He said to me, once, that if a day passed in which he did not do four hours' reading, he considered he was so far unfit to speak to the people. He believed in knowing what he was talking about.

One Sunday evening I had been preaching a restless incon-

clusive sermon on the condition of the poor. After the service I went to attend a meeting of the Socialist League. It was a cold and wet Manchester evening. At the room of the League the caretaker said that, as it was such a fine evening, they had decided to meet out of doors, and told me where I should find them. At the corner of a busy thoroughfare I found a small group standing in the rain around my friend, who was speaking from a broken chair, while the stream of people flowed past, no one being in the least concerned.

It was a piece of the infinite pathos of life, the cold rain as if the very tears of Nature; and it all sank deep, deep into my heart. I had been preaching much the same thing in a beautiful Church, and had been well paid for my labours. Here was the outcast Reformer, preaching on the pavement to the careless crowd that would not stay to hear, who already had been before the magistrates three times, and once imprisoned. That incident put me on the path I was seeking, though just how far it carried me at the time I cannot now remember. It came to this, however, that as before I had had to leave the Bible and go out into the world, so now I had to leave the Church and go out into the world. Thus I was led on in my quest for the Living God.

In another way I had begun to feel the same thing. As I came to learn the nature of the efforts which the working man was making for his own salvation, and for the salvation of the world as he saw it, I asked myself whether I could invite him to come to my Church with any confidence that he would thereby be benefited. With his scanty leisure, and more scanty purse, I saw that it was only as he concentrated himself on these objects in his Socialist or Trade Union organisation that he could ever achieve much. To the working man, the broader culture so easily open to the middle class man is well nigh impossible. His toil is exhausting and stagnating in its influence. If he wakes up to do anything, what he does must be everything to him, and must seem capable of accomplishing everything. He cannot afford to spend Sunday as a day of rest and recreation, religious or otherwise. It must be the day of all others on which he most intensely lives and works. And the more I thought of it, the more hopeless did it appear to find a programme for the aroused worker in association with my Church.

It seemed to me that, in inviting him to come, I should be inviting him to desert his flag and neglect the true work of his life.

I am accustomed to hear it said, in criticism of my own statements, that there is no difficulty in getting the working man to come to Church; and this Church and that are pointed out as proof of the interesting fact. Of course there is no difficulty in getting the working man to come to Church. There is no difficulty in getting him to the Circus, or the Music Hall, or the Public House. There are working men, and working men—*ad infinitum*. The kind of working man that I wanted to associate myself with was not the Church goer, or the Circus goer, or the Music Hall goer or the Public House goer. It was what has been called the "Class-conscious" working man that I sought as a fellow worker—he who has become conscious of oneness with his fellows, and of the revolutionary idea that, only by the salvation and emancipation of his fellows can the glorious dream of HUMANITY ever be realised.

Labour aroused to self-consciousness—I see now that it was that I sought. And my instincts guided me rightly in recognising that such Labour could not stoop to pass through the portals of my little Church. This is the only real LABOUR, viewed as a collective reality—not by any means the whole mass of wage-earners or employees. And this awakened Labour includes more than mere wage-earners or employees. It includes all who share in what I may call the LABOUR CONSCIOUSNESS, whatever may be their industrial position. It is this Consciousness that makes the reality of the Labour movement; and the absence of it makes the working man, or any mass of working men, an unreal thing from the Labour standpoint.

What I have seen in my present retirement is this—that the most real thing in life that I have come across so far is some form of self-consciousness, and that human development is along the line of the extension of self-consciousness. Consciousness, Self-consciousness, Tribal Consciousness, National Consciousness, Class Consciousness—the world-wide Consciousness of the subordinated mass of Humanity for which a new name is needed—Mass Consciousness rather than Class Consciousness, as being the inner awaking to a higher order of life for the great Mass of Mankind, crossing all lines of Nationality, and creating deeper and more desperate gulfs, which only a world-wide Human Con-

sciousness can bridge—then this Human Consciousness, World Consciousness, God Consciousness—the goal that Humanity has to reach.

I did not see all this in my work. This is what my life and my work, ever acting and reacting, always seeking reality and shrinking from unreality, have enabled me to see; and to see because they have enabled me to grow. For no man can see in the world more than he himself is. The method of life is to BE. The growing revelation of God to man is man's own growth. This is how the Universe maps itself out to me now; and it will be observed that I am still learning to see more clearly as I write. I can understand now why I wanted to get that congregation outside the walls of that Church. I can understand now why I felt it hopeless to invite the working man to come and worship God with us there. It is all clear at last. There was more reality outside that Church than inside, and I had a strong instinct for the real, which instinct now appears to have been a higher consciousness growing up within me.

And I can see, too, why I have never been able to answer those who pointed to the good working man going to Church, and those who have blamed me for going outside a Church to do my work, and those who have quarrelled with me over the class question and the question of independence in religious and political action, and why I have always felt that there was some truth in what they said, and yet was sure they were wrong, and yet could never tell them where they were wrong and why I was right. These critics were looking for reasons. I was looking for reality. They were following the lines of intellectual growth. I was following the lines of real growth. The Evolution of Being in the world was going forward in myself; and, as it went forward, the world lay more and more before me as an open book; and is opening still as I write. An hour ago I did not see what I now see as I look back over my life and my work. I feel that I have been the victim of the unfolding God just as much as a daisy or a dog—but with a difference infinitely vast. God is letting me into the secret of his unfolding.

I find it difficult to make way with my story. The incidents of this time come back to me with a revelation of their meaning which I never saw before.

That broken chair seemed to me a more real thing than my

pulpit. But, the reader will exclaim, that Anarchist—Communist—Revolutionist—Atheist did not teach the truth from his chair. My good friend, Truth is vastly bigger than you know, and of more sorts. I learnt this from the Salvation Army.

In the Spring of 1891 I went up to London to attend the National Triennial Conference of Unitarian, Free Christian, Presbyterian and other Non-subscribing Churches; and I went in a frightfully uncomfortable mood, and yet with a presentiment that something would come of it. The Conference itself had little attraction for me, but I knew I could make use of my visit to learn more of what was being done to save the world. Amongst other means of education and stimulus I went to two Salvation Army Shelters. I was greatly perplexed. Undoubtedly these people were doing much for the salvation of the world; but undoubtedly their theology, and their economics, too, were quite false. What did it mean? Could it be that God could work better through a lie than through the truth? Some time after I saw, and now see more clearly still, how infinite Truth is, when you come to understand that it is not of the Intellect alone, but of the whole range of being. Or I may put it that Intellectual Truth is simply the intellectual perception of Reality, and, compared with Reality, a very small thing.

What works in the world of men is not so much the possession of intellectual Truth as Being Real; though, of course, only when Seeing Real and Being Real go hand in hand can man get full power in his work. But this Seeing Real as well as Being Real makes it certain that you will be misunderstood. The man who only Is Real makes the Revivalist, and succeeds. The man who also Sees Real, is the Revolutionist, and fails. The former is, at bottom, a Conservative, in spite of his new methods which shock conservative nerves. He is always saying, "The old was right enough, only you did not work it properly, or did not believe in it sufficiently, or did not understand what it meant." From Moody and Sankey to the Christian Socialist, they are all in the same Conservative boat; these last only urging enough change to keep the Dying Past alive, or seeing in the living movements of to-day only new material with which to get the Past preserved and stuffed. I do not love these Conservatives in Revolutionist clothing. I do try to love them, but I cannot get further than a smile. Thackeray says something very severe

about the result which is sure to follow when a Priest and a Woman lay their heads together to achieve some end. When Priests and People lay their heads together to achieve Socialism, only God and a whole army of martyrs will be able to drag poor Humanity out of the mess they will make.

But there is more than this to be said, and this I learned from the Salvation Army too, since enforced by reading the Life of Mrs. Booth at the time it was published. The Salvationist, in a rough way, is true to the facts about the relations between God and the human soul—unspeakably truer than Mr. Herbert Spencer is—and the power of the Salvation Army lies in its being the living incarnation of this truth, and by no means in the false doctrinal form in which it is held. Intellectually false, these Salvationists are none the less spiritually true; and so far they are a creative power, and so far only. Here is an illustration from the Life of Mrs. Booth—a very mine of religious wealth to him who can sever the gold of life from the ore of doctrine. The story is from an account of Mrs. Ballington Booth's work in Paris.

"It seemed as though the first convert would never come. The people wept and were evidently impressed; but as to definitely seeking salvation, it seemed far from them. But one night the Captain made her way to the back of the hall and sat down by a poor dissolute working woman. She put her arms around her neck and asked her if she did not want Jesus as her friend and Saviour. 'I love you,' she said, looking into the woman's face, while her tears fell on the hard-worked hand. Those tears melted the heart which no amount of preaching would have broken; and this touch of Divine love made the poor woman long to find its source. So before the night had passed the Army's first Parisian convert had risen from the penitent form washed in the precious blood of Jesus."

"God loves you, and here is my love to show it."—This is what I learned to be the truth the Salvation Army had hold of, which gave it its power to lift the people. And this extract illustrates it. Are we not unspeakably nearer to God in the presence of this abandoned lover of souls than in the presence of Mr. Spencer's incapable Absolute? In Religion truth is a vital thing, an incarnate power, a reproductive and creative energy. The creed it teaches is its language, and, in comparison with

the reality of the thing itself, the language is not of the first importance. The language is not the truth. The light and love and power expressed by the language are the truth, the language being a subordinate matter. But yet even the language is of very great importance; and God will have that, too, made truer. But if we make our language truer at the expense of our vital truth, if we get our words right to the loss of being ourselves right—what are we but whited sepulchres? The Life of Mrs. Booth reveals a magnificent rectitude of soul which makes any questioning about the language she used seem almost impertinent. The Life of John Brown produces the same impression. And yet we must insist on the importance of true language also, because people will say—though scarcely the John Browns and the Mrs. Booths, when they see anyhow the fruits of the Spirit—"If you do not speak my tongue, you have no truth in you"—and also for other obvious reasons.

I need scarcely stay to apply all this to my Atheist friend. Let it suffice to remark that this revolutionist seemed to me, and still seems, unspeakably nearer to God, and truer to God, and more really serviceable to God, than a Church which became discontented with me because I tried to send it home discontented to its Sunday dinner. In his society, though I disagreed with him intellectually, I felt in touch with reality. I see the reason now. He had entered into the real life of conscious oneness with his fellows; and God was in that, though he did not know it.

The greatest help which I found from my visit to London came from where I had least expected it—The National Triennial Conference before mentioned. At one of the meetings Philip Wicksteed spoke, and also Ben Tillett. Wicksteed was magnificent. Tillett burst on the audience like a Titan. Yet, though both these men almost prophesied the Labour Church, I returned from London to Manchester, frightfully stimulated, yet still blind and miserable. I have before me the notes of the sermon which I preached on the following Sunday morning, taking the Conference for my subject. These notes show me to have been still feeling as wildly helpless as ever before the great problem. Of one meeting I said, "Each said something true. No one reached the *saving truth.*—Why these dull, soulless preachers? Why these terribly conservative people? Why

these overbearing rich? Why these unsaved poor?—No one answered. Much talk of method. Of means, of power, none." Of the meeting already mentioned my notes say:—

The one meeting which will be remembered as *the* meeting which made the Conference a success was the last—Wicksteed, on "The Church and Social Questions." Some of you, even, would have been alarmed. You will read the address. You cannot understand, unless you know at his very best the man who delivered it, the intense power with which he seized upon and held spell-bound his great audience. The noblest performance of the week.

Rev. Jas. Wood. Ben Tillett.

But this was not what I wanted.

What I wanted to find was—a gospel. That was what I went to London for. One thing needful.

So I returned to Manchester without having gained just the one simple conception without which no living movement could be organised. I give some further notes from my sermon to indicate my feelings at the time.

Supposition, Liberalism in Religion ought to help us.

Running down of a spring.

Not too particular about anything. As afraid of enthusiasm as Church in eighteenth century. No Church can stand so.

Some, seeing this, say, One thing needful—We must call ourselves Christians. Free Christians, truly. As if a church could be organised about a name. That is the last limitation.

* * * * *

What is the one thing we are in dead earnest about? Is it Liberalism itself? No soul. No life. Hollow tree. Bark may be quite ready to expand, but no inner growth to expand it.

Here the difficulty.

How hardly shall the rich enter the Kingdom of Heaven!

Liberal is rich in thought. Varied. As in thought, so in conduct. A little of everything. All things appeal to him.

Yet every successful religious movement means concentration on one thing.

It takes an intense, and hence narrow, form.

God and Salvation Army.

God and our Church? How many of us can narrow our faith down to this? Not to say, God is nowhere else. Salvationist does not say that. But GOD IS HERE—and from hence we can radiate his power and grace.

One thing needful to be learned from the poor.

Visited Salvation Army.

What did I learn?

God loves you, and here am I with my love to prove it.

Concentration easy for poor. Hence these movements which concentrate faith rising among poor.

Can we have the concentration without the poverty?

Can we identify ourselves and our Church with the cause of God in the world, and then consecrate ourselves to God and our Church as simply and ardently as the poorer man to God and the Salvation Army?

And so on—demanding the one thing needful, the single creative conception, and then the entire consecration of ourselves and our Church to it. It was very hard on the Church; but preaching these demands was the only way to find what I wanted. And what I wanted came—that evening.

I was walking home after the evening service, and overtook a working man, a member of the Church, who had attended very regularly until the last few Sundays. I asked him what was the matter. We had a long talk, pacing up and down the hard pavements, and at last it all came out. He liked me, he liked my sermons, but he could not stand the atmosphere of the Church. He could not breathe freely. He gave examples of the kind of thing that upset him. In answer, I said, that if he could not find a home in that Church, it was no home for me; and that we must get one started to which we could go together. We shook hands, with the promise on my part that I would form such a Church, and on his that he would help me. That was the first step taken towards founding the Labour Church—Sunday evening, April 26th, 1891. My wife was in Norwich at the time. I lay awake some hours that night, my brain turning over and over this new idea, and fell asleep with the determination that a Working-man's Church should be formed.

God in the Labour Movement—working through it, as once he had worked through Christianity, for the further salvation of the world—that was the simple conception that I had been seeking, and which at last came to me in the sleepless hours of that night. Now I had a living thought which could make the organisation of fuller life possible. Now I saw how infinitely little were the dimensions of my Free Church. It became plain that I must go outside that Church, and throw myself wholly into the midst of the Self-conscious Labour Movement. In me its self-consciousness was realised as God-consciousness. My mission was to spread that realisation far and wide. Now I saw how and where

we could become God's fellow-workers in the world, and accept our own responsible position in the unfolding of man's high destiny. Man must become the Human Providence of the world, in co-operation with God as the Divine Providence; and in these times the Labour Movement seemed to be the point at which he could best co-operate—the growing point of the evolution of Humanity Godward. A simple conception, with an infinite sweep, which it will take ages of evolution to justify to the Intellect.

I had found the work I sought with a vengeance, but still the proposed organisation wanted a name. This came from my Anarchist-Communist-Revolutionist-Atheist friend. I went to him with my proposal to get it criticised. To my surprise he jumped at it. What he saw in it was a kind of Socialist Salvation Army; and hard experience had taught him the need of some kind of religious enthusiasm to rouse the torpid masses. But he said I must not call the new organisation the Working-man's Church, but the Labour Church, because he was sure I did not wish it to stand so much for a class as for a principle. Thus the idea was completed, and its organic expression found its right name. My own personal development had proceeded until it had brought me into the line of human development, from which sprang that further consciousness of God in the world which was needed to complete and unify the previous results of my long quest. In the rush of work that followed I could not discover the full meaning of what I did. I will try to make that meaning more clear to the reader as it now appears to me.

All my experiences lead me to conclude that the goal of evolution is the awaking of the consciousness of God in us. It seems to me that no life is REAL until it becomes God-conscious, that all unfoldings of consciousness have this as their final cause, and that no form of consciousness becomes complete until the height of God-consciousness is reached.

From this point of view, the real progress of man consists in the ever higher and wider sweep of his consciousness—Self-consciousness, Collective consciousness, Universal consciousness, God-consciousness—until man becomes aware that the reality of his own life and of the life of the whole Universe is God.

Great movements have always followed this principle of the extension of consciousness, but they have quite unconsciously

done so. Even if, in the East, there has not been this limitation, the process has been maimed by asceticism, which rejects part of life, and only unifies into consciousness what is left. This Oriental rejection of a part of life is the great defect which the West must make good. We must reject none of the functions of our being, but must work them all out sincerely, according to their place and purpose in us, knowing that the end of this working out lies in finding God in them all, and the reality of them all in God. So, too, we must not reject the world. We must live in it, work in it, share in its activities, always along the line of the discovery of God. Until the whole of life becomes our own, made real to us and unified by the discovery of God in every part, we have not fully realised the meaning and the reality and the harmony of SELF, UNIVERSE, GOD.

Now, if I am right in the conclusion which experience has forced upon me, the work I am trying to do along these lines means, not merely a new departure in religious methods, but the awaking into human consciousness of the hitherto unconscious methods of human growth God-ward—not of individual growth merely, but of collective growth also.

Moreover, if I am right, we have something here of infinitely greater importance than any discovery in Science. We have the appearance on earth of a new fact in self-consciousness, which Science will some day be able to discover, and place alongside of other facts which are recognised.

Be this as it may, my method of work in the Labour Church is based on the invincible conviction that I am now able to consciously co-operate with God in the process of human evolution. This method was followed instinctively, or sub-consciously, at first. Now the meaning of it is revealed to me. Now I know what I do. This is the Method of Life.

Does all this seem the wildest folly? To me, at least, it seems simple and clear enough—the mere alphabet of human progress. And it is just the kind of development that the doctrine of Evolution should lead us to expect. But vast as the effect of Darwin's work has been, it has not yet led the Scientific Man to see that his highest call now is to be on the look-out for the appearance of new unfoldings. He is still the Priest of the old life, not the Prophet of the new. His eyes are hidden by accomplished facts from the discovery of facts in the making.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LIVELIHOOD AND LIFE.

THE opening of the Labour Church on Sunday, October 4th, 1891, was a step which led to two things of the greatest consequence to myself—first, that physical collapse which has brought with it so many difficulties; and, secondly, a corresponding growth of illumination which still proceeds as I write.

According to THE RULES, I had no business to commence the Labour Church when I did. I had long been overworked and underslept, and had not the strength to run my own Church as I ought, much less to organise a new one in the heart of the Labour Movement. But the idea had come, and the opportunity; and the next year there was to be a General Election. The fruit was ripe, and must fall. I had it up and down in my mind continually; discussed it all with my wife, who nobly left me free; and had to go on—with the inevitable consequence.

It was great to be alive that first year—but, in the noise of the battle, I neither saw nor heard. I laid out a giant's task, and told my wife that I was not strong enough to break down. Only strong men break down, I said. But in a year I was done for. Since then my time has been spent in discovering the fact. But it was good to know "the joyous swing of advance." I have often looked back with gratitude and regret to those band-and-banner days, when we laughed at our mighty task.

I had thought to carry my old Church with me into this new life. There was some opposition, of course, when first my proposal was brought forward; but very kindly expressed. One of the principal opponents, as of the kindest, was the Warden of the Church—perhaps the greatest man I have known—Edward Vansittart Neale. In the gentlest yet warmest manner, the veteran Co-operator—so near his end—told me I was wholly wrong. I feel the pathos of it now more than I did then. All of us

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put together did not seem worth the little finger of that man, who only sought to serve, and whose soul was the soul of a child. Never was young Reformer more tenderly, though earnestly, remonstrated with by old Reformer, than I was by him, as all who knew him would well understand. But I had full freedom to go on; and the majority—chiefly the younger and the poorer—were with me in what I proposed.

But two months after the Labour Church was started I found that I must leave Upper Brook Street, and in another month had left. It was natural that the more responsible members of the Church should be dissatisfied. I was not only associating myself, and so far the Church, with Socialists and Agitators, who sometimes said extreme things, which were exaggerated or misrepresented by the press; but also I must have appeared to them like a paid manager, who was using his position as the means to enable him to open a shop on his own account. Moreover, it was better in every way that I should have had to go—not by the least compulsion, but because I found that my remaining would create difficulties which nothing but resignation could avert. When the position was kindly but sadly put to me by one of the members for whom I had the highest respect, I saw clearly that I had come to a dividing of the ways, and that only one way was open—the way ahead. This point clear, I resigned; and did my best, and that successfully, to prevent any secession from those I had to leave.

It is only just to the memory of a great man to say, that Mr. Neale had no part in this. Indeed, though Warden of the Church, and a regular attendant when in Manchester, which was nearly every Sunday, his home was near London, and he was seldom able to take part in the business affairs of the Church. It was his work for the cause of Co-operation that led him to spend part of the week in Manchester—in lodgings as humble as those of many a Manchester clerk. Nor must it be supposed that Mr. Neale was a Unitarian. It was the undogmatic and cultured preaching of my predecessor that led him to find a home on Sundays at Upper Brook Street. Mr. Neale was really a Trinitarian and a Tory, but with a Trinitarianism and a Toryism exclusively his own. And I often think of his remaining at the Church after my predecessor had left, listening Sunday after Sunday to sermons which must often have made him sad, though

he never said a word, as one of the innumerable examples he gave of a simplicity and grace of character quite marvellous in a man whose opinions were so thoroughly thought out and so tenaciously held, and to which he sacrificed all his time and all his wealth. Indeed, I cannot imagine a character in which strength of purpose and child-likeness of heart could be more highly developed and more perfectly combined.

I think I have painted my relations with Upper Brook Street in colours too dark. There was a brighter side to my work there than the one which this story of restless search reveals. The young people of the Church invited me to a farewell meeting, at which they gave me a farewell letter—which I have just taken from a drawer with the intention of quoting a few sentences to show what our relations were, and what the effect of my ministry was, on the younger folk at least. But I find it too sincere and simple to be shown to the outside world; and it seems to have, too, the quality of some faded flower pressed in an old book, that, to one heart, lives with the life of long ago, but to other hearts is dead. So I put it back in its drawer. Nevertheless, reading it again fills me with gratitude and strength, and a confidence, deeper than words, that all is well.

I have always thought objections to a paid ministry very shallow—very unreal—far away from facts. When the relations of minister and people are honourable, I think no money is more cleanly earned in this somewhat unclean world. Of course there are possible evils in the relationship; but there are possible evils in every relationship in life. Danger attends our every step, whatever course we take, the only salvation from which lies in honesty of heart. I do not think we escape by cutting down the scale of life, but rather deceive ourselves thereby. At the same time, if a man feel within himself that he cannot accept a salary to enable him to preach, that is a fact which I respect. What I cannot respect is an attempt to make of such a fact an example, or a theory, which should bind other men. We are in danger, in this direction, of having conduct imposed upon us as unreal as the fasting of the Pharisees.

But, on the other hand, the man who preaches simply to make a living is beneath contempt—I mean the man who stocks his pulpit as the draper stocks his shop, to suit his customers; or who is satisfied to meet the demands of his hearers upon him,

and never asks a higher message from God—the slovenly soul, that makes so much solid resistance to progress. The implied understanding, where people and preacher are both honest, is, that livelihood shall cause no anxiety while God's work appears to be getting accomplished. When I found that some of the more responsible members of the Church thought I was not doing God's work, I saw that the reality of our relationship had departed; and the whole circumstances of the situation were such that the only step possible was to withdraw from it.

The fatal mistake in all these matters lies in making rules. There are those who declare that no man can live the higher life with God, and yet remain in business relations with the present commercial system. Now, if any man have a right to make such a statement as that, I have. I had to give up Architecture to find God, and I had to give up my pulpit to follow God. Yet I should not dream of generalising from these subjective facts. It seems to me monstrous that any man should declare his way of following and finding God to be THE WAY. It is Creed and Dogma and Authority all coming back on us; and, with these, human tyranny too. In social matters there is some excuse for dogma—in other words, law. In the spiritual life there is absolutely no excuse; and the fact that new rules are still being laid down in new movements shows how little we can expect from much of the new life—which is not new after all, but simply a revival of past forms. We have had it all over and over again, for centuries, East and West.

Men ought now to be big enough to understand that each of us must go to God in his own way by himself, and to let others do the same. But people seem as if they cannot comprehend the magnificent originality and personality of a life lived with God. One would have thought that Walt Whitman would have been a sufficiently fine example of this to' escape these folk; and yet but the other day I saw him claimed as a Theosophist! There must be a systematic way of getting to God, which we can all learn together and travel along in flocks! The great Prophet of Personality claimed as a Theosophist! We might as well seek to impose on men and women a system of falling in love. No two lives are the same, and no two religions are. No man's religion can be described in terms other than God and Walt Whitman, God and Mazzini, God and Jesus, God and Paul.

Until this uniqueness of the religious relationship is understood, Religion will always be the enemy of progress, and suck the life out of every progressive movement.

The difficulties that I have since got into through giving up my means of livelihood have been such, that I should be sorry to impose my action as a rule for another man. It was the right step for me, however; and though it has led me into difficulties, these have not proved insuperable—so far. When I have seemed at the edge of the abyss, I have then been able to find some fresh continuation of the path. And here I am now, nearly done for; but not done for yet. If it has turned out all right, it has been because I followed no rule, but lived hard on facts as best I could. I should not say all this, but that I see the men of rod and rule trying to build walls around the Labour Church, and I cannot get about among those to whom I have consecrated my life, to tell them how infinitely greater and more godlike freedom is than fetters. SELF, HUMANITY, UNIVERSE, GOD—these are the real elements of the religious life; and no cheap system must make them less real to us, less immediate.

On giving up my pulpit, I hoped to be able to live in the midst of my new work by journalism. It was very foolish of me. Singularly enough, some good Unitarian friends were so interested in my venture, that they came to my rescue, and gave me, for some time, ample financial help. If this had not happened, I do not know what I should have done; but I certainly should have found myself in a very tight place. But then it has always been that way with me, as I suppose it must be with every man who lives hard up to the edge of his opportunities, and who does literally "seek first the Kingdom of God." In regard to this help, so unexpectedly and generously offered, I felt as I did about a minister's salary—that the money was perfectly clean while I remained true to myself. I think I have done that; and though the difficult position to which ill health has reduced me has often been very hard to bear, yet I cannot see that it has, in any way, either blinded my eyes or hardened my heart. It has been my thorn in the flesh—a discipline of a very wholesome though of an exceedingly painful and perplexing sort.

It may be well to state here the theory which I held in regard to the financial side of my work, and which I still hold. It is part of my deep faith in things, on which I have lived since the

time I lost my Christianity—a deep confidence in the trustworthiness of the Universe—or rather a deep confidence that I may trust the Universe, from which I conclude that others may trust it also if they are themselves true. For these things are always above rule and dogma. They are always personal, and must spring from a personal relationship.

With this confidence, I told the people at one of our early services that they need not trouble themselves about money questions—that what they had to trouble themselves about was the life and the work of our movement—that, these being secured, the money would come. This statement was repeated to a friend of mine, who afterwards wrote me a letter in which he charged me with being a fool, and misleading the people. And yet I know that what I said was true, and have always myself acted upon the principle implied in it.

I am sure that no movement was ever yet killed for want of money. The only thing that can kill a movement is want of ability, want of power, want of life; and I wish the Labour Movement as a whole could understand this. It is inconceivable to me, for instance, that the Labour Movement is impeded for want of payment of members of Parliament. The real state of the case is, that the demand for Labour representatives is made by a few very earnest people and a larger number of very half-hearted ones. While this is the case, it must be obvious to any person who has any sense of the reality of things—a rare sense, truly—that, though more Labour Members might, through payment by the State, sit in Parliament, such a Parliament would be worth no more to the people than the present one is. As a fact, Labour has thousands upon thousands of pounds in its coffers, which it prefers to spend on strikes, rather than on independent representation in Parliament. The difficulty is not with the money. It is with the men.

I know what want of money means badly enough. My strength has been broken more by this than by anything else. And I used to think that a private income would have enabled me to help the world. I see, now, that so far as I am ready to help the world, or the world ready to be helped by me, the means most suited to the end will be found, whatever they may be. So I never think now of want of money as being a cause why the work of my life should fail. The Universe is not built quite

so cheaply as that. Want of money is an effect, not a cause, of failure—in my own case due to the fact that, in Manchester, I undertook a work almost infinitely beyond my strength. Moreover, with this conviction in regard to money, whenever funds have run low, I have regarded the situation as a demand for more and better work. This has been hard on me, of course; but if a man who cannot sleep under anxiety feels compelled to undertake anxious work, he must accept his fate.

But, it will be said, is it not very demoralising—this continual need to keep work going and money coming in? Everything is demoralising—and everything is moralising—it depends on yourself. Oxygen quickens the living body, but corrupts the corpse. I have not much patience with people who coddle their virtues, lest they should take a chill. This is a rough world. We were not placed here to have an easy time. We are here for discipline and training, and for the growth in us of love and power and all the gifts of a serviceable life. And until we lift this money question, and all questions, to the level of this high life, we shall always be making realities of mere forms, and forms of realities. Of all things in the world, this Money is among the least real, the most symbolical. To the Reformer it may be a discipline or a snare. His salvation lies in understanding its symbolical quality, and what it symbolises.

At the same time I fully recognise how like my conviction in regard to money is to an error of a very foolish sort. On one occasion, a man who was well off had indicated his desire to help our work, but had not done so. On removing to London I called on him, pointed out how much we needed such help as he could give, and told him the use to which his money might be put. I found that since I had first heard from him he had grown much more spiritual in his view of life. He said he believed the Lord would enable his children to carry on any work he wanted them to do, without their having to trouble about its financial support. And so he declined to help. I hope I need not go over all the ground again to show wherein my position differs from his, and why I think he was guilty of unreality amounting to cant.

None the less, I can understand people feeling that God's work and financial difficulties go ill together. I can understand that they should think that a man should always be perfectly reason-

able, and never undertake more work than he can perform without the help of others. On this point I judge no man. If I could work on these lines, I would. It would be for my peace and strength. But I cannot think it right—for myself. I know that, with the co-operation of others, I can do much more for the world than I can do alone. I know that there are others who want doing for the world what they and I can do together, and what we cannot do apart. Moreover, in my own case, a certain prescriptive line of duty falls to me now from past labours, from which nothing short of absolute necessity can relieve me. And then, after all has been said, I can do no other than I am doing. After all my reasons, I really have no choice. For me there is no other way ahead—all others absolutely closed up.

In regard to which, I must repeat, There are no Rules. Each of us who is called to serve the world, by combating old errors and teaching new truths, finds himself surrounded by very many hindrances, but always by some helps. How to get the most for the world out of the situation—that must be his one concern as a fellow worker with God. Some are in danger of making the maintenance of their personal dignity their chief concern. Others are in danger of losing their personal dignity in their anxiety to help. There are dangers on the right hand and on the left, and each must decide on his own path for himself, or follow manfully the path marked out. No two of us are alike, and the circumstances of no two of us are alike. I will say this, however, that no man can be justified in sacrificing his real life to his work. The moment he begins to conform for the sake of support, he is lost. He, above all others, must, at any cost, live his own life, and let his work follow as it may.

I might add much more on this important question of money in relation to reforming work. I can see plenty of reasons which could be urged against my faith, but they still do not touch it. It is my own faith. It represents my own growth over things. It is a perception in me of my relations with God and the Universe—a consciousness of what the world is in this respect, and what powers it will succumb to. For, in the growing individual, and in the growing race, there is a prophetic faculty, which means a growth going forward, but not yet completed. My faith in matters of money is an illustration of this in the individual. It was there, and acting upon it has clarified and deepened it—

there, and as natural for me to discern, as it is for me to discern the coloured lights and shadows of the valley spread before me, and the pathos of the bent old man, digging potatoes for another out of the brown hill side.

So much for the subjective view of the question. But there is, of course, the objective view—that of the generous man of means, for instance, who almost invariably endows the second-best work, because he has not the prophetic insight to discern the best. One might write bitterly of this fact, for it represents the one fact which, however man progresses in all the virtues, will always, in one form or another, make the best work, not so much a task to be accomplished as a cross to be borne. But bitterness would be entirely out of place, if only because the best work has always certain ugly qualities—I know no better term to use—qualities which make it look ridiculous or immoral or even blasphemous to the ordinary good man. And I imagine this must ever be the case in a world in which progress is made by the continual evolution of higher types of life. In human development there will always be a struggle for existence on the part of the best, more tragic in its consequences to the best than the world has yet begun to understand. When Hans Andersen wrote his UGLY DUCKLING, I wonder whether he knew what his story really meant—how frightful it is, in a world of ducks, to be born a swan—the awful upsoarings and downsinkings of the life that is more than one step ahead—the Mount of Transfiguration with God, the Mount of Calvary with man, whence, Gethsemane notwithstanding, even God seems to flee away for a time.

But the subject is too vast, and I am only beginning to see what it all means. Anyhow, my faith has been justified. I am still here; not yet broken. I have had to give up all my work; yet it is all going forward in other hands. I am at last incapable of doing anything but write this book; yet I am doing the best work, the most necessary work, of my life. I hope it will sell, and make my way easier, and my home less overburdened. But if not, my work will not be hindered by want of money; though there may well be hindrances which take that form on themselves—hindrances which would not be removed, though I commanded the wealth of the world. For my faith is no pious belief, but a perception of the Reality as against the Show of things.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN THE CHESHIRE HILLS.

EXACTLY a year after the inauguration of the Labour Church in Manchester, I broke down; and though I have again and again made efforts to return to the public life, which my heart desires and my work appears to demand, those efforts have always failed. I lost a certain amount of nerve power at that time, which I have never been able to regain. I had my "Annus Mirabilis," and have paid for it ever since. I have long concluded that I was dragged from the arena to do better work; but the dragging has had to be repeated again and again, and has been very hard to bear. And the better work is very slow in getting itself accomplished. By better work, I do not mean other work; but deeper—nearer the foundations of things.

In the Winter of 1892-93 I spent six weeks with wife and children among the Welsh Mountains. On returning to Manchester I seemed quite restored, and set about my old labours. But the power for these was gone—for ever gone. In the Spring of 1893 I had to retire permanently from Manchester, and went to live in the Cheshire Hills, at Rulow, near Macclesfield. The view from our little house was magnificent, and often inspired me at my work. But it was very painful, too, to feel the contrast between all this, and the Sodom and Gomorrah from which I had been forced to flee. And I did a deal of looking back.

Even there, too, were signs of the conditions under which the poor are crushed. On cloudy nights the glare of the furnaces in the Potteries was reflected in the dark sky. On clear days I could sometimes see a cloud of smoke gradually wind around Mow Cop—the furthest hill visible in the direction of the Potteries—and then slowly spread over the Cheshire plain, and go on spreading, until all the plain was hidden from view, and the long line of Welsh Mountains in the far distance was blotted

out. At other times all the hills around us would be covered with Lancashire smoke. Macclesfield itself, too, was a frightfully poor town, the whole conditions of its industrial life making it almost a hopeless place, though not without hope. I suppose few towns show the insanity of our present industrial system so sadly as Macclesfield.

In so young a movement, suddenly springing up into such vigorous life, it was inevitable that absenteeism should produce its own set of difficulties, and those of a kind very hard to contend with. Indeed, I had to pass through an experience, similar in some respects to the one which had its ultimate effect in taking me back to Architecture, though the form of it was very different. As to this form, I can only say, that it did not come from the Labour Churches or the Labour Movement. Notwithstanding this, it became almost impossible for me to maintain myself in a position to serve the cause which was, as it were, the flowering of my whole life. Staggered, and nearly overthrown, as I was by these difficulties, and crippled for years by them, I regarded them in much the same way as the financial difficulties of which something has been written. They both were made possible by my inability to carry on publicly the work I had commenced. It was in the nature of things that what happened should happen, in one form or another. I came to see that, however sorely I might be stung, and however badly my work might seem to suffer, I could not really be disabled, while I remained true to myself and my mission. With this proviso, I believed that the only real effect on me and my work would be a deepening and a purifying one. None the less, I was long perplexed and paralysed.

These two experiences—the earlier and the later—the nature of which I may not discover, both came at first as a profound shock to my whole moral nature. I was staggered by them, and for some time inwardly injured. Yet I can now accept both as having been of inestimable worth in the upbuilding of my life; though I still sigh a deep sigh of regret that things should happen so. In both cases I see how much my life has gained; but both have left a sore which nothing in this life can heal. Their effects live in me in an entirely impersonal form. I recognise that what gave them their power was something inherent in the very nature of things. But when some elemental force cuts right

across our inmost purposes and our inmost life, and thwarts our natural development, and compels us to courses foreign to our character, then we find ourselves face to face with a fact, the meaning of which, I think, we shall never exhaust in this life. I believe, however, that it is such facts as these that give us hints of the true nature of evil; and suggest that it is but a temporary form for temporary ends, which one day we shall be able to acquiesce in.

It is the recognition that these difficulties have their strength in the very nature of things that makes them stagger us so, and keeps us from accepting them as long as we possibly can. At first they seem to cheapen, not only our own life, but Life itself. But we have only to be faithful, and wait, going on with our work as we may. Then we come to see, very gradually, that they are as openings into a wider life which we cannot quite understand; but the very existence of which fills us full of hope, and gives us greater freedom to grow. They are like the marvellous contradictions that the mathematician discovers in his work, if he pushes it far enough—paradoxes which appear to be inherent in the very make-up of our phenomenal life, and which suggest to the deep thinker that there must be a life more vast and real than this, or this, with all its strange inconsistencies, could not possibly subsist.

It is impossible to return to Galilee from Jerusalem, and find Galilee the same. I had not only learned the meaning of the Staffordshire and Lancashire smoke, as it blotted out the beautiful vision of Nature. I myself was no longer the same. None the less, the hills and the valleys helped me; and the wide-sweeping, many-coloured plain; and the lovely lines of mountains, delicately tinted, whereon Sky communed with Earth on clearest days. More changeable than the sea was the scene from my study window—more powerful, more tender, more grand—more troubled in storm, more restful in peace. Through it all the consciousness of the eternal oneness of things sank deep into my heart—myself a living and loving part of the whole, whose life and love the beauties of Nature helped to grow.

Experiences do not repeat themselves—we are so hurried on from growth to growth—yet here I found the Infinite Presence nearer than ever before. In the old country days, Nature suggested God. Here God himself came unmistakably into my own

self-conscious life. In the old days I could not help believing in God. My one solid possession when I left the country was an invincible conviction of God which nothing shook. Now I began to know God himself—to know him in the sense of being acquainted with him, by meeting him unexpectedly as I turned some corner of life. I did not try for this. Indeed, I did not know that this was possible. But it came. Anxious, beset with difficulties, I tried hard to go on with my work as though I were not an exile. But there were seasons when my own individual life grew intense; and then, when I simply lived most intensely, the surprise of God's presence came.

Thus the spiritual life justifies itself to those who live it; but what can we say of its experiences to those who do not understand? This, at least, we can say, that it is a life whose experiences are proved real to their possessor, because they remain with him as permanent realities, when brought closest into contact with the objective realities of life. Dreams cannot stand this test. We wake from them, to find that they are but dreams. Wanderings of an overwrought brain do not stand this test. We go out into the world of our fellow men, and they pass away as a summer cloud. But from no stage that we have reached in the spiritual life do we ever go back. It becomes a permanent element of our consciousness, and cannot be ever lost. These highest experiences that I have had of God's presence have been rare and brief—flashes of consciousness which have compelled me to exclaim with surprise—GOD IS HERE!—or conditions of exaltation and insight, less intense, and only gradually passing away.

I have severely questioned the worth of these moments of clearer vision. To no soul have I named them until now, lest I should be building my life and work on mere phantasies of the brain. But I find that, after every questioning and test, they stand out to-day as the most real experiences of my life, and experiences which have explained and justified and unified all past experiences and all past growth. Indeed, their reality and their far reaching significance are ever becoming more clear and evident. When they came, I was living the fullest, strongest, sanest, deepest life. I was not seeking them. What I was seeking, with resolute determination, was to live more intensely my own life, with supreme confidence in the worth of my own

convictions and instincts, as against what I knew would be the adverse judgment of the world. It was in the most real seasons that the Real Presence came, and I was aware that I was immersed in the infinite ocean of God.

I know how aggravating all I can say of this will be to most of my readers. There is no help for it. It must be so. God's revelation of himself is personal, and can never be reduced to a revelation of the Guide Book sort. There is no reliable Guide Book. There is YOURSELF, the UNIVERSE, GOD. Live faithfully by what you ARE. It is the only way. The gifts of God cannot be communicated or transferred. Ourselves and God, and the relation between ourselves and God, are all too real for that. We may encourage each other, and help each other to live, and we may leave each other free. Beyond this I do not see that there is anything more that we can do. If we could but do this, and be content to do only this, what advances would be made in our religious life, and in all moral and social relationships! And I do not think we shall make much progress now, until we have learned this lesson. Of course we shall see plenty of changes; but, apart from this awakening of man's consciousness to the true nature of the religious life, and of the freedom and personality of it, all changes will be but the revolutions of a wheel, whose axis makes no progress.

Meanwhile, the Labour Church was spreading; and the movement was organised on a representative basis. Through this democratic organisation, I hoped to find myself one of a band of fellow workers to whom the Labour Movement had the same religious significance as it had to myself. At present, however, democratic organisation in the whole Labour Movement means throwing together a mass of conflicting elements, in which he must struggle to maintain a place who thinks it his mission to serve. Moreover, I could not visit the Churches systematically, such attempts as I made from time to time always failing. I could not sleep; and I could no longer work on short sleep as I once could. Thus I could not keep in that personal touch with the people which an official position demands. As soon, therefore, as I could believe that I could better serve the cause as an individual rather than as an official, I retired. This withdrawal compelled me to rely more on spiritual forces than on an official position which I was not strong enough to hold; and it

made me the more free to concentrate myself on service I could better perform.

None the less, I was quite aware that mere retirement from office was not any final solution of the problem I had to solve. I still had heavier prescriptive responsibilities to the movement than I could bear alone; and, further, all my instincts made it natural for me to seek a free companionship, in which my own limitations could be lost in the larger mind of the group. For, though I am such a pronounced Individualist in regard to the religious life, yet I fully recognise the necessity of man associating himself freely with man, if he would achieve his best and most fruitful work. It is a very difficult problem; but it is certainly necessary, even to individual progress, that the personal life and the collective life should grow hand in hand.

It was at this time that I conceived the organisation of service for the Labour Churches on quite other lines. In their democratic organisation I could only find a place by taking a position which carried with it certain executive power; and I found that this position reduced me to the level of a politician, who has to scheme for his own hand. The possession of power, with its attendant limitations and disabilities, seemed to me entirely inconsistent with that living free relationship which I desired to hold towards the movement. I wished, naturally and rightly, to be an influence, and a strong influence, in it; but I came to see that, in work such as I was attempting, the less power a man has, the more wholesome will be his influence, and the more durable its results, while the arrest of his own growth will be less endangered. All that the Reformer needs is freedom to work and grow.

What I proposed, then, was the organisation of a LABOUR BROTHERHOOD, which should be a group of those who, like myself, were anxious to work for the awakening into self-consciousness of the religious life of the Labour Movement, and who could be trusted to do this without seeking power and place, or gratifying any lower ambition than that of service. It seemed to me that the very existence of such an organisation of free and devoted personal effort in the name of the Religion of the Labour Movement would be an example of inestimable value to the whole Labour World, as well as the means of rendering it the highest possible service.

There was another difficulty that I hoped might be successfully met by the organisation of a LABOUR BROTHERHOOD. I am deeply convinced that Labour must work out its own salvation. The chief value of the new Labour Movement just now is that it gives the working man a chance to develop his powers such as he has not had hitherto. His position in the industrial world is, for the most part, that of a cog in a vast machine. He has no opportunity for developing business ability, or efficiency in planning and organising. Day after day he plods along, doing over and over again the same sort of thing, and always under orders as to how and when and where it is to be done. Formerly the working man with brains could exercise and develop his powers by becoming a little master. Happily the day of little masters is passing away; but, in the present state of things, the workers individually bear the heavy burden of the change.

Thus it is only in his own political and other organisations that the worker can find that opportunity for mental and moral development that his daily labour denies. From this point of view I am coming more and more to the conclusion that, so far as Labour Organisations are concerned, they are fulfilling their functions the better, the more they are left in the hands of the working man. I would certainly make no rule of this principle. Nevertheless I cannot help feeling that, when working class organisations are in any way officered by middle or upper class men, an element of weakness is introduced, and an opportunity for development lost.

Of course I am aware that the class leadership of the masses—these are hateful terms, but they represent a hateful fact—does sometimes produce more immediate visible results. But the cost to the masses, and, indeed, to the whole national life, is too great. They cannot awaken into any real self-consciousness so. They are still subordinate; still allow others to think for them, and act for them; still extend the evils of their industrial bondage throughout all their activities; and miss those opportunities which, through new experiences, should quicken their new life.

And this is true, also, in regard to thinking as well as in regard to acting. The worker to-day has to face, at first hand, the problem of most immediate importance to humanity—the problem of the Emancipation of Labour. I do not minimise the importance of Gas-and-water Socialism. But, as compared with the real

question of the freeing of the man who now works for wages, and, above all, the question of humanising his work, and spiritualising it, by making it a divine co-operation—the Gas-and-water question appears unreal and phenomenal. I say—as compared with the real question—for I am still a member of the Fabian Society, though a somewhat heretical member in regard to this supremely vital matter. Let the worker, then, think out his freedom, as well as work out his freedom; though with all the help the Fabian or any other can give him. What he is, and what he does, is what demands emancipation; and this emancipation is part, and a very important and inseparable part, of the boundless problem that Man must now awake to—the problem of running this Earth of his intelligently, instead of being run by it as he now is. Merely to victual the Earth, with the Fabian, is a very small part of the question, though not unimportant; and until we see into the living heart of the whole problem, we shall bungle with it badly.

From this point of view—and also because we shall not be ready for social salvation until we do actually set ourselves down as toilers, or as helpers of the toilers, and make our toil or our help a real fact in our living—my ideal of the relation of the classes to the masses is, that the former should abandon all thought of leadership, and simply be satisfied to serve—a position which the Fabian Society is taking up with much generosity, though also with some pardonable self-righteousness—pardonable, not only because of the enviable cleverness of its possessors, but also because it is continually throwing a certain salt of humour into the situation, which keeps things fresh and vital. I see very clearly that the whole Labour Movement is badly in need of the service of those who have had such advantages in life as are denied to the working man. What has hitherto made such service so objectionable, and even revolting, has been the element of patronage and leadership in it. All this must be given up. The superior person who goes to the East End to make the East Ender like himself is a mistake. It is something more human, something more brotherly that is needed. I think we reach to a higher level of service when we leave the working man to organise himself, and simply give such personal help as we can, without in the least lessening his independence and freedom. Such help I believe to be the

highest religious service which man can render to man to-day—that service of God through the service of man for which all prophets have pleaded.

And there is another reason for this plea for the independence and freedom of the working man. In him we have an unused-up energy that exists in the same form in no other class; and an energy without which no genuine reform can be made in the social or religious world. The history of nations suggests that God is always discarding material that is worked up, and always looking out for raw material to work up—as though the Divine Energy loved an opportunity rather than an achievement. In the vast mass of toiling and serving humanity I see the raw material for God's next work in the onward march of Man. What else does this awakening Labour-consciousness mean? And I am sure no true-hearted man has ever associated personally with the newly awakened workers, without feeling that they have some original powers still strong within them, which culture can never give, but may take away. We cannot afford to lose the free and strong play of these powers through class patronage and leadership. Let us be content simply to serve.

The difficulty is for the educated man to concentrate, and so he loses force. The working man has no such difficulty, once he takes up with anything. To him an idea is all in all. Hence the concentration of working-class movements. But he has a difficulty of his own, too. He loses sight of the facts that lie on his right hand and on his left. Here the educated man may help him; but he must do it so as not to weaken his independence and his energy and his wholesome instincts. If he simply make the working man a bad imitation of himself, or a follower of himself, the world loses. The happy medium is only to be discovered by a happy instinct. Or rather, it is not a happy medium that is to be discovered, but a combination of elements into a new quality, without which the man of advantages can never be more than the superior person, with whom neither God nor man can do anything.

All this is what I mean by the organisation of a LABOUR BROTHERHOOD. I know that many think the conception a narrow one, as they thought the conception of a Labour Church narrow. The fact is, few can understand how a man can concentrate the full force of a universal idea upon a particular

point of the world's progress. Yet that is what is always demanded in any really effective work. Having risen to the height of universal life in God, we must find out what God is doing most effectively in the world to-day, and then take our coats off. I see now that this is what I meant by going first from Folkestone to Ballingdon, and then from Ballingdon to London and on to Manchester. Then I had to go to Rulow to begin to learn the meaning of what I had done.

A universal idea concentrated upon the growing-point of the world—that is what the Labour Brotherhood means to me. But its organisation, planned in 1894, was deferred for a time by events which swiftly followed.

My withdrawal to the Cheshire hills had left me still rejoicing in the pride of being. Amidst all my troubled existence, from the time I lost my Christianity, I had found it an inspiration merely to think that I was alive. The thought, IT IS I, which had so appalled me in childhood, now made me realise that I was greater than the stars. So far I had learned to rise to every event, and had confidence that I always should. Though my band-and-banner days were over, I still felt it great to be. Difficulties were always threatening to crush me; yet I wanted to live on this earth as long as it lasted, to see this great world-drama through. It was so tremendously interesting; and I, too, had a part, and could trust my fate.

One lovely Sunday in June, 1894, I spent the morning on the hill sides with my youngest boy, then six years old. He chattered merrily to me all the while, as we gathered a bunch of mountain pansies to take home to his Mother, his brothers having wandered together further down the valley. He was the pride of my heart —this fine strong child—so resolute in will, yet so tender in feeling—so proud and self-centred, as strong natures are, yet with such capacity for sympathy as is seldom seen in a boy. In his presence I could understand how Emerson called his boy, "a little bud of God." His older brothers respected him; I reverenced him, and often wondered to what he would grow. It seemed to me that he might be what I wanted to be, and could not.

On the following Thursday he was kept from school with a cold. On Friday we sent for the doctor, who made light of the matter. On Sunday we learned with horror that our child was beyond human help. The disease seized his throat, and, through

that awful night, slowly strangled him to death. Early on Monday morning he died in his mother's arms, talking to us to the last, though all the night through he had been gasping and struggling for breath. It seemed so like murder, to see a strong boy slowly suffocated like that.

"He was not cared for like the others," was the heart-breaking remark of his mother. We had to make our economies on going to the hills; and this boy, so strong and sound, did not seem to require the care the others had. On the Thursday morning, when we knew he had a cold, I persuaded his mother to let him go to school. She was not very well, and was very tired; and had he remained at home, it must have been in her charge. So he went to school, but had to be kept at home in the afternoon because his cold was worse.

It is a common tale. "Whom the gods love die young," shows how old the story is. What does it mean? Why should it be? I know enough of life to be sure that it has a meaning, a reason; and that one day I shall acquiesce. Meanwhile, one can only work faithfully on and wait. I do not see that any reason given by any religious system can clear up the mystery.

Then I lost the pride and the joy of life, which hitherto had been a great part of my strength. Then I felt that I should be glad to lay down my work and die. Then the undying life seemed so real and near to me, this dying life so unreal and far from my heart. I grew weary and sick of the earthly show, and longed deeply for the nearer reality of God. That death shook the world's foundations for me; and made me realise, as I never had before, what a temporary show it is. And I began to think I had acted in it long enough. It seemed to me that my boy was living a more real life in a more real world than mine.

Yet I am sure that Other-worldliness is a mistake. Though this earth is but a stage, it has a reality of its own which we must learn to accept. And we must not bow our heads too low to Fate. We are here to learn to manage this earthly life of ours on an ever increasing scale, until Humanity has the Earth beneath its feet. This, too, seems to me a very real thing. And love and hate are real, and joy and pain, and peace and war, and the healing of wounds and the shedding of blood. We must act our part loyally in the old show, although we now and again get glimpses which reveal to us what a poor show it is.

The complexity of life, and the need still to concentrate!—The depth of life, and the necessity to act whole-heartedly on its surface!—The infinite vista beyond, and yet the command to work hard on this little patch of Here and Now!—How God draws us out with it all, until we ache through and through! Yet how infinite the growing grasp of it makes us! But we begin to escape the "Education of God" when we allow our feet to leave the earth. Life and Work, Religion and Reformation, Galilee and Jerusalem—these cannot be separated, any more than God and the World can be separated. All this I began to learn from my boy's death, though I have never seen it all so clearly as now.

This sorrow had a strange effect on my memory. It took away all perspective from the past; and still, to this day, all past things seem equally distant from the conscious present. My recent life in London seems as far off as my life at Rulow, or Manchester, or Ballingdon, or Folkestone; save so far as knowledge corrects the mental impression. My memory looks back on a landscape which is all distance.

Before the end of this same year a far heavier blow fell. We were beginning to return to life. My wife would have more time now, and would be able to help more with my work. We planned it all out, and made the necessary arrangements in our home. But it was not to be. She had never been the same since our other boy died, though she had resumed her old self-control and strong management of life. But the severe discipline was not to be gone through again. It was evident that her strength was failing—the spring worn out and ready to break. After a consultation with a specialist in Manchester, she became too ill to be taken home; and in a Manchester hotel, after a fortnight's severe illness, she died. Relations and friends and medical skill did all that could be done for her recovery or relief. But the end had come to her strong and devoted life.

On the last day she said to me, "I shall always live with you." And I answered, "Yes, you will." Our life together had been a continual progress, in which we learned more and more fully what God meant marriage to be. It did not seem possible, now, that Death should destroy that which had grown so real, and which was growing more real still to the very end.

It is impossible to write a fitting tribute to the memory of my

wife. And yet my whole story is incidentally such a tribute, and one of vastly more value than any obituary notice. Our union was a continual education to me; and I think I am learning more from it now than ever before. For it was a living education; and life always unfolds—ceaselessly unfolds—incapable of exhausting its powers. And, also, I have again a love and a home, which make the contemplation of the old love and the old home bearable and fruitful, and still creative within me.

* * * * * *

Never to be again! But many more of its kind
As good, nay better, perchance: is this your comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God: ay, what was, shall be.

* * * * * *

There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound;
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.

* * * * * *

The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by-and-by.

* * * * * *

Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know.

ROBERT BROWNING.—*Abt Vogler.*

CHAPTER XXX.

AU REVOIR.

At which point, where the life I lived was completed, and the life I am living commenced, it is necessary now to break my story off, at what time to be resumed I cannot tell. The remainder has been written to date—with its troubles and despairs and protests and risings again—but the ferment is all too fresh for it to be poured forth for the world yet. In the dark it must mellow and sweeten. In my still deeper retirement the meaning of it must become more clear, till the light of God shines through.

These three unrecorded years seem to me more sacred than any yet, as they have also been more full of difficulty and perplexity than any, my home alone having made it possible for me to have lived them through. And this sense of sacredness bids me not rashly lift the veil. More rich than any have they been, inasmuch as they have brought me, not only their own return of gold, but much gold from the past also, which, while I was still in the midst of it, I missed. For it is only in the life that I am now living, and in the love that makes it possible, that I have been able to see the past life in a clear and steady light.

During the present year, 1897, now three parts through, I have been shut up to the writing of this story as the only work I could do, and that toilsomely enough. All else has had to be given up. I have had to withdraw into the heart of Sussex, where now I am writing this, in the midst of hills, less lofty, but more rich and beautiful, than those I loved in the North. For I have experienced another swing of the pendulum—driven from the hills to London, driven thence to the hills again, but now to the hills of the South—another alternation of action, brief enough, and of collapse, long drawn out.

I hope to tell, also, the story of my year of active work with

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the Labour Church. I could not write of it here, for I had not the power to master a place for it in this book. And if I hope this, it is not merely for the part I took in it; but rather to tell of the excellent company I kept, and of all my friends taught me, and made it possible for me to hope.

For my long retirement, now stricter than before, has not caused me to lose my love and my faith towards those in fellowship with whom a new light seemed suddenly to break forth. And though I know that those days of old can never be for us again, that henceforth our life and our toil on earth must be apart, yet I cannot think that we have done with each other yet, that what was begun then is to be permanently broken off.

We then co-operated with each other and with God for the progress of the people, for the march of man on earth. That year we were greater than we knew, more real than we knew, nearer to God than we knew, much being hidden from us in the noise and the smoke. Quieter days have followed—days of greater difficulty, of less acclaim—days to try men's souls if they are of the right stuff. And these days, too, have been worth. We have learned what we could not have learned in the bustling strife, have heard what we could not have heard in the cry of battle, have been disciplined as we could not have been disciplined in the swift advance.

We have really lived. We have really taken our part with God. We cannot cease to be. And we are of the same army still. If further apart now, more beyond grasp or call, it is only in the show of things. In God we are still one. In him we shall meet again. And I trust, meanwhile, we shall also meet again through another volume of this my Book of Life.

Of what I now publish, a few words must be said. It was written first in the early months of this year, in circumstances desperate enough, and had then to be put aside. I have now revised the story as far as possible, and re-written a good deal. But there is something in the last few chapters which I fear to touch, lest, with my present limited working power, I should lose the life in attempting to mend the form. These last chapters were written hastily, under a sense of compulsion, lest I should not be able to finish my task. This fact made me think of them as those which would need revision most. But they were also written with a consciousness of growing illumination; and it is

because they reveal something of this process, that I let them stand as they are.

The reticence that I have been obliged to observe at critical points in my story makes me very dissatisfied, so much so, that, in one particular, I will withdraw from it as far as I can. I have said that my highest experiences of the presence of God in my life were so circumstanced, that I could not give any account of them. I will, however, describe here a minor experience, of which I made notes at the time—the only one of which I made any contemporary note—and will do so, for the most part, in the words I then wrote down. It occurred while we were living at Rulow, in the early summer of 1894, when I was in my fortieth year, the year after the higher experiences mentioned, the first of which occurred in Norwich in 1893.

One brilliant Sunday morning, my wife and boys went to the Unitarian Chapel in Macclesfield. I felt it impossible to accompany them—as though to leave the sunshine on the hills, and go down there to the chapel, would be for the time an act of spiritual suicide. And I felt such need for new inspiration and expansion in my life. So, very reluctantly and sadly, I left my wife and boys to go down into the town, while I went further up into the hills with my stick and my dog. In the loveliness of the morning, and the beauty of the hills and valleys, I soon lost my sense of sadness and regret. For nearly an hour I walked along the road to the "Cat and Fiddle," and then returned. On the way back, suddenly, without warning, I felt that I was in Heaven—an inward state of peace and joy and assurance indescribably intense, accompanied with a sense of being bathed in a warm glow of light, as though this external condition had brought about the internal effect—a feeling of having passed beyond the body, though the scene around me stood out more clearly, and as if nearer to me than before, by reason of the illumination in the midst of which I seemed to be placed. This deep emotion lasted, though with decreasing strength, until I reached home, and for some time after, only gradually passing away.

My past life then appeared before me as something done with, something finished off, something about which I need be anxious no more. I saw the necessity of it all, the rightness of it all, as a whole. I felt that the foundations of my life were completed,

the building well commenced, the walls breast high, the scaffold poles now needed—that the outline of the picture was drawn, and all the broad washes laid in, and the lights and the shadows fixed; that now I might take up my favourite brush, and work fearlessly among the brightest colours, confident that, though not right yet, it would come out right.

And although I did not, at this time, experience that intense consciousness of God being all about me, which, with similar suddenness and illumination, I had experienced the year before, yet I felt how very near and familiar God was, and how utterly safe my relations with him were—so perfectly so, that there seemed to be a kind of humour in the situation, as though two friends, who had had a misunderstanding and had felt themselves estranged, should suddenly see how foolishly unreal their feelings were, and burst out into a great laugh. So I felt as if able to laugh aloud in the face of God, to think I should ever have had any fear of our not being always on good terms, always friends. Indeed, I believe I never felt so exceedingly light-hearted and buoyant and full of inward laughter as at this time, or so perfectly sure of God and of myself.

For the experiences of the year before had left me in some doubt as to their worth Godward, though, in regard to the circumstances which led up to them, their worth was immense, emancipating me finally from any possibility of conceiving an antagonism of any kind between the body and the soul, and making me sure that I was then progressing along my own true Way of Life. These earlier experiences were of the illumination of God himself coming into immediate touch with my soul—very simple and brief, but very intense. The later experience which I am now describing was rather of the illumination of the atmosphere in which God dwelt, in which I suddenly found myself—the consciousness that God and I were in the same place—a far more complex and informing experience, throwing light on the whole of my life, and filling me with supreme satisfaction with the result—not self-satisfaction, but satisfaction, rather, in becoming aware that I had been rightly led.

But such an experience as I have here recorded—coming as if to prepare me for the desolation soon to fall, filling me with a new confidence in God and in myself—is absolutely worthless to any one else—this one especially so; for it contains in it

nothing from which another can learn, but is only the record of a subjective fact in my own life. From other experiences, if I might have recorded them, I believe much might have been learned. And yet, to me myself, they were of little worth at the time; for I so far doubted their value that I thought once of writing to a friend about them, who I believed would understand them, to ask him what their good was, and how reliable they were. But I wisely refrained from doing so. Whatever answer had come, it could have given me no help. Only further experience could prove the worth of these experiences; and such further experience I have since had. I know now that these seasons of illumination were the most real and reliable of my life; and I know it in exactly the same way as I know waking experiences from dreams.

I may remark, also, that these sudden illuminations have never changed my course of life; but only confirmed me in it, and carried me further along. They have come as the ripening and falling of fruit, not by any means without much preparation and cultivation, though I did not know what the preparation and cultivation would produce. I do not regard them as in the smallest degree sent of God in any exceptional sense. I am sure they come to us, or do not come, in the very nature of things. And I believe that one day they will be the common possession of all sound men. Moreover, that my experience is very exceptional, I do not at all believe. In the East, I suppose, such things are common enough; and, perhaps, far more common than we think in the West too. This opens up a field of inquiry on which, one day, I hope to enter. Its importance cannot be exaggerated; for here we have the ground on which Religion and Science will meet—Religion the creative Art, of which Science will seek to observe and classify the facts—facts, always increasing in number, and ascending in the scale of being.

I hope the reader will not think that I have attempted to give here a finished picture of life—a statement of what life ought to be, of the doctrines to which it should conform. I have attempted to describe, as faithfully as I could, the process of my own life—a process which is still going on. He will have missed my purpose entirely if he do not understand me when I say, that the meaning of life is in its process rather than its conclusions. In real living we touch nothing anywhere that has an end. Each

seeming conclusion is only another step of the staircase, leading us on to the next. And I cannot imagine that ever a time will come when there will not be a next.

My religion, when I really think of it now, takes away my breath. The height it places me on makes me giddy, looking down or up. There are seasons of rest in it, of course; but it is not an Oriental religion of repose. It is a religion of whirling activity, of straining effort, of expansion joyous to the verge of pain. And I know it is real. I know it represents what we are, and how divine we are to be. It is a religion of the West, a religion that will enter, sooner or later, into all western activity, intensifying it still further, by no means lulling it to rest. It is a religion of creative insight and power, which will one day have this ball of Earth wholly in its grip, making it sing a merrier song than now as it spins its way through space.

The discovery of what I am, and of how God and the Universe and I stand related, seems sometimes more than I can bear. Yet it brings with it a sure confidence, too, and a deep peace, rising up in this infinite ocean of Being, in which I now find myself, as a steadfast rock for my feet. Of which confidence and peace, deeper than all else in my life, I would like to say much; but words fail. As on the title page of this book I have placed some lines from Walt Whitman's PRAYER OF COLUMBUS, so here will I end with words from the same poem, borrowing them to express what it needs the Poet to tell.

> That Thou, O God, my life hast lighted,
> With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,
> Light rare, untellable, lighting the very light,
> Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages;
> For that, O God, be it my latest word,
> Here, on my knees, I thank Thee.

EPILOGUE.

It is Sunday morning. I am sitting on a bank of grass by a hedge, bathed in the September sun. Before me lies a great sweeping valley, wooded with oak and underbrush. Ten miles away, the South Downs rise on the horizon, tender and blue. The lowing of cattle, the neighing of horses, the barking of dogs, the crowing of cocks, the twittering of birds, the voices of children—all can be heard, now and again, faintly rising and falling across the floor of this ocean, whose waters are an infinite Silence—a silence as of a Voice self-consciously hushed. It seems to me, now, that it must break forth with loud harmonious passion of the joy of existence—as if it could no longer contain itself.

Before I set out from home, I had been glancing through the Life of Mrs. Booth. It impresses me deeply to open that book of so real a life. Each time I take it up, I am stirred by it, and made very discontented with myself. Yet, in the end, help and hope arise.

It is so this morning. I have been asking why I could not make her task mine, why I could not concentrate myself on the old and narrow way, why I could not sweep aside all other considerations, and take up the old Cross with the crowd—heavy enough still when truly taken up—instead of shouldering this newer and heavier one alone.

This work to which we are now called is so complex. The simplicity of the old gospel looks so charming, so dignified, by its side. Why have we to trouble about these many things—Science, Art, Politics, Industry, the wages of the workers, the homes of the poor? Is not the end of the soul of man still the one thing—for ever to enjoy God?

It is always so. When I have read Emerson, I have longed for Emerson's calm. When I have read Carlyle, I have longed for Carlyle's strength. When I have read Whitman, I have

longed for Whitman's joy. When I have read John Brown, I have longed for John Brown's magnanimity in facing life and death.

Years back I had to learn to accept myself. This Sunday morning I see that I must learn to accept my task. It is not only that it is so vast. It is so lonely. This work, begun in the marching crowd, I must carry on silently alone. Only here, amid these silent trees and hills, do I find a Presence that understands. Only here can I gladly accept the knowledge that Mrs. Booth's concentration on the old gospel is a thing of God's past—for me at least.

My perplexity is the perplexity of the world itself. I am bewildered by the vastness of the life, the energy, that have to be unified in God. When I try to express it, people say I am vague. The world is not ready yet. It still craves the old limitations, the old concentrations, that it may go more comfortably and conformably on its way.

But it may not be. Life is infinitely more complex to-day than in the days of Jesus and of Paul. Every day it grows more complex. Every hour some new fact crops up, for which the old religion can find no place. Man's religion must grow, or go. There is no other way.

And it cannot go, any more than I can escape my task. God will not let us stop growing, however we struggle and squirm. "Life is a mission," says Mazzini; and as a mission we must take it up. "Saviours must not draw back," says Mrs. Booth. There is no easy way to save the world.

There is a power to be attained, a possession of the soul, greater than Pagan self-realisation, greater than Christian self-loss, greater than anything that can be hyphened on to self—the joy-pain of a creative life welling up within us, that makes us Creators, too—that shakes the frail foundations of our physical life almost to its overthrowing—that sets the soul in the midst of a land of earthquakes and storms, there to serve its apprenticeship in the creative art—that staggers our intellect when we perceive its significance—that makes our highest thought appear profane, our highest morality immoral, our highest truth false.

The world is new every morning. In the dark hours of the night the old world has died, and a new one come forth to the light of the new day. It looks the same, but it is not. People

pretend that it is the same; and go on repeating the sayings of yesterday about it, deceiving each other so. This is the great Lie, that hinders discovery and progress.

And we must accept the burden of living in a new world every day, between the hours of the sun's rising and setting wrestling the heart's meaning out of it. It is an awful task. We feel that we were not equipped for it—that God has made some mistake, handed us out the wrong number, meant a stronger man to shoulder our burden. But no questions are allowed. We must take the burden up, and carry it through. Only so can we learn what we are, what the world is, what God is. Only so can we serve our apprenticeship on earth. Only so can we become Masters, Creators, Fellow-workers with God.

Thus this infinite ocean of Silence speaks to me, as I listen from this bank by a hedge, bathed in September's sun. And now I envy no man his task. In me the passionate joy of existence wells up, painful to bear, for no language of mine can utter it forth. But I rise to go to my home with a heart unspeakably glad.

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"It is a tremendous idea, this, to combine with the ugly revolt of Labour going on to-day, the highest sanctities of the inner life, and 'the peace of God which passeth understanding.' But it is no new idea. Jesus realised it. From the streets of Jerusalem, where he stood and cursed the 'Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,' in language more scathing than any I have heard in the Labour Movement, he retired, as the shadows of evening fell, to commune with God in secret, and to strengthen his wearied soul for the morrow's conflict.

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* * * * * * * *

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"The compilation of this Hymn Book has been rendered necessary by the formation of Labour Churches in Manchester and other towns.

"The Labour Church is an organised effort to develop the religious life inherent in the Labour Movement, and to give to that Movement a higher Inspiration and a sturdier Independence in the great work of personal and social regeneration that lies before it. It appeals especially to those who have abandoned the Traditional Religion of the day without having found satisfaction in abandoning Religion altogether.

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"The Call of the Labour Church is to men everywhere to become 'God's fellow-workers' in the Era of Reconstruction on which we have entered.

"The first Labour Church Service was held in Manchester on the first Sunday in October, 1891. In reading, prayer, hymn, and song, the traditional forms and phrases of Religion have been discarded, and every effort has been made to emphasize the Religion, not of creed or of history, but of actual everyday life, and especially of the great and growing Labour Movement.

* * * * * * * *

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N.B.—*This Tract has been translated into French, German, and Dutch, and copies can be had at the same price as the English Edition.*

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"If, then, the Labour Movement is to find religious utterance, there must be a Labour Church."

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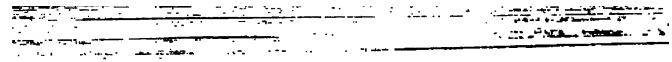

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